

ABSOLUTE POWER

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Based on the book by  
**DAVID BALDACCI**

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**FOR EDUCATIONAL  
PURPOSES ONLY**

**FADE IN:**

**1 INT. WASHINGTON MUSEUM - DAY 1**

The saddest eyes you ever saw.

We are looking at an El Greco drawing. It is a study for  
one of his paintings.

**PULL BACK TO REVEAL --**

A bunch of art students are doing sketches of the eyes,  
the elongated fingers, the slender hands El Greco drew so  
brilliantly.

Most of the students are around 20. A couple of suburban  
housewives are there too.

And one older man.

This is LUTHER WHITNEY. Mid 60s, very fit, neatly  
dressed. At quick glance, he seems as if he might be a  
successful company executive.

As we watch him draw we can tell he is capable of great  
concentration. And patient. With eyes that miss  
nothing: He has pilot's eyes.

We'll find out more about him as time goes on, but this  
is all you really have to know: Luther Whitney is the  
hero of this piece. As we watch him draw --

Luther's sketchbook. He is finishing his work on the  
eyes, and he's caught the sadness: It's good stuff.

Luther. It's not good enough for him. He looks at his

work a moment, shakes his head.

**GIRL STUDENT**

Don't give up.

**LUTHER**

I never do.

**GIRL STUDENT**

May I?

She's indicated his sketchbook. He nods. She starts thumbing through.

The sketchbook as the pages turn.

Detail work. Eyes and hands. The eyes are good. The hands are better. Very skillful.

**(CONTINUED)**

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**1 CONTINUED: 1**

The GIRL hands it back. Impressed.

**GIRL STUDENT**

You work with your hands, don't you?

**CLOSEUP - LUTHER**

\*

An enigmatic smile. Now, from that --

**2 EXT. RED'S BAR - DAY 2**

A nice working class part of town. Nothing fancy here but there's a pleasant feel. The streets are clean, the houses neat and well tended.

Luther, carrying his sketchbook, walks along. It's afternoon now. Up ahead is a local bar: RED'S.

**3 INT. RED'S BAR - DAY 3**

Luther walks in. Nothing fancy here. Strictly working class. And relatively empty. An overweight bald man Luther's age works behind the bar. This is RED. They are good enough friends not to ask each other questions.

**LUTHER**

(as they nod to

each other)  
Redhead.

**RED**

Luther.  
(as Luther hands  
him a videotape)  
Your life would be a whole lot  
simpler if you could learn to  
operate a V.C.R.

**LUTHER**

My only failing.

As he turns --

**4 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - LUTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 4**

A street of small row houses. Clean, well tended.  
Luther walks toward one. Later in the afternoon. He  
carries half a dozen small shopping bags, from the  
market, the hardware store, the drug store, the cleaners.

3.

**5 EXT. LUTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 5**

A terra cotta planter to the right of the front door.  
Luther shifts his packages, tilts the planter slightly,  
bends down, pulls out a key, inserts it in the front  
door.

**6 INT. LUTHER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 6**

as he enters. Neat, tidy. A Cuisinart, a cheese slicer,  
lots of other nice equipment. As he begins putting food  
away --

**7 INT. LUTHER'S HOUSE - DINING AREA - NIGHT 7**

Evening now. Table set for one. A single candle.  
Beside the candle is Luther's sketch pad. Now Luther  
himself moves INTO VIEW, carrying a tray. He puts it  
down.

A gorgeous omelet is on a fine china plate, parsley  
sprinkled neatly on top. An elegant green salad is on  
another plate, covered with thinly sliced parmesan  
cheese. An expensive water pitcher, a lovely glass.  
Clearly, a great deal of thought has gone into dinner.

Luther lights the single candle. We are now aware of a  
photograph nearby. The picture is old. A pretty little

girl stands in the center, smiling. Her mother stands alongside, smiling too. A man is with them, looking at them happily. It's Luther. When he was young.

Luther studies the photo a moment. Then he turns, looks out the window.

**8 POV SHOT - SLIVER OF MOON 8**

is visible. Lovely. Peaceful.

**9 LUTHER 9**

Now Luther opens the sketch pad, quickly flips past the hands and eyes and faces --

-- we are looking at something totally different: a mansion.

HOLD ON Luther's drawing of the mansion.

**KEEP HOLDING.**

PULL BACK to reveal --

**4.**

**10 EXT. SULLIVAN MANSION - NIGHT 10**

In the moonlight -- it looks exactly like his drawing.

But no drawing could convey the size of the place -- we are looking at ten thousand square feet. Wealth and power.

We're in rolling hill country. The mansion is dark. Totally deserted. Silence.

Now a sound - TIRES ON GRAVEL. A car comes rolling INTO VIEW. The motor of the car has been turned off. The lights of the car have been turned off. The car slides to a stop. Again, silence...

HOLD ON mansion, a couple of hundred yards away. There is a small field between the car and the estate. Now --

**11 EXT. SULLIVAN MANSION/INT. LUTHER'S CAR - NIGHT 11**

A man holds binoculars, studying the place. He wears dark clothes, tennis shoes. He puts down the binoculars, begins to smear his face with black camouflage cream --

-- it's Luther, and he's been a professional thief his

entire life. He's a three-time loser, but his last sentence was so long ago and his skills are now so vast, so refined, that it is unlikely he will ever get caught again.

**12 EXT. SULLIVAN MANSION - GROUNDS - NIGHT 12**

The grounds as Luther glides through it. He wears a backpack.

The night is cool.

He stops. All that separates him from the mansion now is a stretch of gorgeous lawn. Except for Luther, it isn't gorgeous -- it's no-man's land.

One final check of his surroundings -- then he sets off, in graceful motion, long strides eating up the ground. He makes no sound at all.

**13 EXT. SULLIVAN MANSION - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT 13**

Thick wood with reinforced steel.

Luther stops by the door, takes off his backpack, opens it. He puts on plastic gloves that have a special layer of padding at the fingertips and palms. Now he takes a key, inserts it in the front door, turns it, and the instant he pushes the door open -- ZOOM TO:

5.

**14 INT. SULLIVAN MANSION - FOYER - NIGHT 14**

The infrared SECURITY DETECTOR -- it immediately starts to BEEP and you can see the seconds being counted down: forty, thirty-nine, thirty --

CUT TO:

**15 LUTHER 15**

-- in his hands now is an automatic screwdriver, no more than six inches long --

-- he sets to work on the security panel that is inside in the foyer next to the front door.

The screwdriver undoes the first screw, the second --

CUT TO:

16 SECURITY DETECTOR 16

Thirty-one, thirty, twenty --

CUT TO:

17 SCREWDRIIVER 17

Now the third and fourth screws are in hands and he lifts the security panel away.

The BEEPING sound is constant --

-- and getting louder.

A tiny device, no bigger than a pocket calculator. It has two wires protruding from it. It is, we are about to find out, a tiny computer. Luther holds it like a baby.

CUT TO:

18 SECURITY DETECTOR 18

Eighteen, seventeen --

CUT TO:

19 LUTHER 19

probing with the wires into the heart of the security panel.

(CONTINUED)

6.

19 CONTINUED: 19

The BEEPING is LOUDER still.

The security panel. Luther is attempting delicate work and it's dark so it isn't easy but he continues to probe with the wires and --

CUT TO:

20 SECURITY DETECTOR 20

Eleven, ten --

CUT TO:

21 LUTHER 21

and he's got it attached!

22 COMPUTER 22

Now the face of the tiny computer is alive with numbers -- they fly by much too fast for us to make them out clearly.

CUT TO:

23 SECURITY DETECTOR 23

Four, three, two --

CUT TO:

24 FACE OF TINY COMPUTER 24

as five numbers lock -- 7 -- 13 -- 19 -- 8 -- 11 --

The BEEPING sound dies.

CUT TO:

25 LUTHER 25

A glance across the foyer -- the lights of the security detector go from red to a warm looking green.

Safe.

(CONTINUED)

7.

25 CONTINUED: 25

He allows himself to exhale. Then he's busy again, unhooking the computer. His fingers, as always, work quickly, precisely.

25A INT. SULLIVAN MANSION - FOYER - NIGHT 25A

The foyer as Luther, once again carrying his backpack, moves across it. Behind him, the front door is again shut, the security panel back on, screws all in place.

It's as if he hadn't been there at all...

26 INT. SULLIVAN MANSION - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

26

Luther walks quickly up -- and here we get a sense of the vast size of the place -- it feels bigger inside than it looked in the moonlight.

A Van Gogh at the head of the stairs. Luther moves past it, then stops, goes back, studies the painting. It's a late one, when the madness had him and things were sliding away. Very sad.

Luther looks at it admiringly for another moment --

-- then surprisingly he raises his hand, and for just an instant traces the lines of the painting in the air, as if trying to figure out how the magic was done, as if getting ready for his next museum session --

-- then almost grudgingly, he moves on, up toward the third floor.

27 INT. SULLIVAN MANSION - THIRD-FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

27

Here's a Hopper. One of the great ones, filled with an overpowering sense of being alone --

-- Luther stares at it almost in awe, whispers "wow," moves on.

28 INT. SULLIVAN MANSION - HALLWAY - NIGHT

28

Luther, walking down the third-floor corridor.

The corridor walls. No paintings here -- instead we see a series of framed photographs. The first is of a baby girl, the next one of the same child at three.

We watch the child grow up in these photos. At ten she is already pretty. At fifteen a stunner.

(CONTINUED)

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8.

28 CONTINUED:

28

Not a classic beauty by any means, she is turning into, if you will a latter-day Ann-Margret. The kind of girl you ached for in high school. The perfect cheerleader.

These are pictures, we will come to know, of Christy Sullivan. A high school graduation shot at eighteen, a shot in front of a Burger King at twenty.

**CLOSEUP - WEDDING PHOTOGRAPH**

\*

Christy, looking just fabulous, is 24 and smiling happily. We can only see her face and the wedding veil here. Now --

PULL BACK to reveal --

A glorious and expensive white wedding dress. Christy holds a bouquet of flowers. Breathtaking.

**KEEP PULLING BACK.**

And now we can see the groom. Walter Sullivan. Walter is smiling too, one arm proudly around his lovely bride.

Walter, it might be noted, is eighty years old.

Luther, staring at the photo, shakes his head. Now he moves on.

**29 INT. SULLIVAN MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**29**

Luther opens the DOOR. It SQUEAKS. He goes inside, closes the door firmly. Next, he puts his backpack down, takes out a low-power non-glare work light, sets it up. Now he looks around. A huge room, a gigantic canopied bed.

A nightstand alongside, which contains a small silver clock, three Danielle Steel novels piled neatly one atop the other, several more photos of the happy couple --

-- and an antique silver-plated letter opener with a thick leather handle.

Luther. He studies himself in front of a very large full-length mirror across from the canopied bed.

Now we realize something -- he isn't studying himself, he's studying the mirror itself.

He turns, goes to the sitting area where there are chairs and a sofa and a large TV and VCR.

**(CONTINUED)**

**9.**

**29 CONTINUED:**

**29**

Three remotes on a side table. Luther carefully picks up the middle one, crosses the room with it, points it at

the large mirror, clicks once --

-- and the mirror swings silently open.

A room is revealed. All we can see of it so far is this: There is an armchair in the middle facing where the mirror had been.

Luther turns back toward the sitting area, the remote held in his hand.

The side table. Luther puts the remote down -- very carefully. In the exact position it had been. Now he takes a moment, blows on his hands, rubs them together.

Then -- Luther takes a collapsible duffel bag out of his backpack, moves with the work light into the revealed room --

**30 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - VAULT - NIGHT**

**30**

It's a vault! And it's FULL! There's cash, naturally, piles of the stuff. Plus all kinds of other valuables we'll get around to.

Luther's a little stunned -- it's more than he hoped for.

He glances at the armchair -- there is a remote on it that is identical to the one he replaced at the side table.

Now he opens his duffel all the way and sets to work. First the cash goes in -- all neatly bundled. Large denominations. Lots of bundles. Next are a series of slender boxes --

The first box as Luther opens it.

Jewelry.

Into the duffel it goes.

Luther, emptying more jewelry boxes into the duffel. And still more. As he continues to do this --

**31 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**31**

All is quiet. High on a wall, the security light beams a friendly green.

Now, from somewhere, a distant sound. LAUGHTER? Was it laughter? Doesn't matter, it's gone.

32 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT

32

Luther has moved deeper into it -- he's finished with the jewelry. Now he's examining piles of bonds.

Into the duffel they go.

He takes a breath, glances around. Perfect.

Coins. Antique ones. They disappear into the duffel.

Stamp books. Gone into the swelling duffel.

Luther as he hears now the DISTANT LAUGHTER. Not so perfect.

33 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

33 \*

He moves quickly out of the vault, takes a step toward the door -- the GIGGLING is getting LOUDER, closer. Two people. A man and a woman.

Luther stops, mutters "shit!" -- glances around -- No place to hide. Luther, grabbing his backpack, moves into the vault, turns off his work light, and shuts the door with the remote. The DOOR CLICKS --

34 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT

34

-- Luther is alone in the darkness.

A burst of LAUGHTER now. Growing nearer still.

Luther moves into the back of the vault, crouches down, doing his best to hide behind the armchair. Trapped, Luther waits in silence, trying not to breathe...

Now he can hear a SQUEAK -- the BEDROOM DOOR has opened.

HOLD.

35 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

35

Dark -- except for a slant of light from the hall outside the open bedroom door.

Two people are briefly visible as they enter, a MAN and a WOMAN. The CLINK of GLASS. Stifled LAUGHTER.

The Woman closes the bedroom door.

Darkness again.

And now the LAUGHING sound increases. GIGGLING, really.

11.

**36 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 36**

Luther in the pitch-black vault. The GIGGLING is MUTED but it is there. He is starting to perspire.

**37 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 37**

The woman flicks on the lights and as she does --

**38 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 38**

Luther as the burst of light hits him like a fist -- and it's over.

Luther blinks, confused, looks around --

-- because it isn't over, he hasn't been caught.

The door to the vault is suddenly gone. Luther is staring straight into the goddamn bedroom.

Because the door is a two way mirror. Now it's as if he was watching the bedroom on a giant TV screen.

Just a few feet away, just outside the door.

Where things are clearly starting to heat up.

Luther moves to the armchair, sits. There is nothing to do now but wait. He settles in.

**39 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 39**

They are staring at each other.

We have seen the woman already -- she's CHRISTY SULLIVAN. But the pictures in the corridor did not do her justice.

This is a fabulous-looking twenty-five-year-old woman. Long, golden hair, a round face that sets off her deep blue eyes, a tanned, curving body. A bare-shouldered black dress. An expensive necklace.

One more thing: she is staggering drunk.

The man is ALAN RICHMOND, wealthy, successful, handsome and fit. Mid-forties. He wears an elegantly-cut suit.

Two additional points: (1) Richmond is clearly not the husband in the wedding photo. (2) He is drunker than she is.

(CONTINUED)

12.

39 CONTINUED:

39

Richmond carries a vodka bottle and two tumblers. He fills them, gives one to her.

They touch glasses. Down the hatch. Tight laughter.

He looks at her.

She looks at him. There's a lot of sexual tension in the air.

But now he begins looking around, checking things out. She spots this.

**CHRISTY**

(drunk)

It's okay -- I told him I was sick -- anyway, he's gone -- relax...

He nods then, more at ease. And he blows her a kiss.

She catches it -- and now she starts to parade for him. Her body moving very slowly.

He pours himself another shot, chugs it, watches. Now --

40 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT

40

Luther suddenly terrified and we find out why.

41 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

41

Christy, fumbling with her necklace, looks across the room --

What she's looking at: the side table with the remote that opens the vault.

42 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT

42

Luther, frozen, as Christy starts toward the table.

43 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 43  
The table and the remote waiting there.

44 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 44  
Luther, mouth dry...

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45 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 45  
Richmond, reaching out for her, then as she passes him;  
he takes her by the hand --  
-- and now they are dancing, their bodies pressed  
together. They move slowly. She hums. He tries to get  
fancy, spin her with one arm --  
-- no good. They're too drunk for it, starts to lose  
balance, separate.  
They giggle. Smile at each other. Now Christy manages  
to unhook her necklace, and as she starts to drop it in  
the drawer of the nightstand -- \*  
\*

46 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 46  
Luther. A genuine sigh of relief --  
-- which suddenly dies --

47 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 47  
Christy, as she spins toward the table again, still with  
the necklace in her hand.

48 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 48  
Luther, and there's nothing he can do now but watch.

49 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 49  
Richmond, watching too, emptying the vodka bottle into  
his tumbler, chugging it down and now...  
The table as Christy reaches out, grabs a remote, turns.

50 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 50

Luther dead in the water because --

**51 CHRISTY'S**

**51**

pointing the goddam thing at him --

-- and as she CLICKS it --

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14.

**52 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT**

**52**

Luther, and for a moment, he's like a goddam deer caught in the headlights --

-- but now here comes another sigh of relief and we find out why.

**53 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**53**

Suddenly there's ROMANTIC MUSIC PLAYING -- she's turned the STEREO ON. Christy starts humming, replaces the clicker, drops the necklace in the drawer.

\*

Then they are into each other's arms. Their bodies press. Their bodies sway. He moves a hand to her breasts --

-- Christy breaks loose, shakes a finger at him, as if to say, "naughty, naughty" --

-- then with one hand, she pulls a zipper down. The dress falls off her body. Her breasts spring free. She is wearing only her panties now and high heels. And a smile.

She is stunning looking and she knows it and men have always gone nuts over her and she knows that too. And Richmond can't resist her either, goes to her, bends her back, caresses her neck, begins sucking her nipples. Christy moans.

**54 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT**

**54**

Luther, in the chair, embarrassed, averting his eyes.

But the MOANING from the other room GROWS LOUDER, more insistent.

**55 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**55**

Christy, pulling away for a moment, starting to work at

Richmond's tie, shakes him out of his suit jacket, reaches for his belt, loosens it. She is working at his shirt buttons now and their breathing is audible and in a moment he is down to his boxer shorts and then her panties are off, her shoes kicked away and they are near the vault mirror now. As they approach it, they stare at themselves.

**56 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 56**

Luther, moving farther back in his chair as their faces are just a couple of feet away --

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**57 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - CLOSEUP - CHRISTY - NIGHT 57**

as Richmond's hands move across her wondrous body and she is hot and drifting into drunken fantasy and her eyes close and --

**CLOSE ON RICHMOND**

\*

as his eyes are open --

-- the look on his drunken face is scary.

**58 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 58**

Luther, transfixed by that look, transfixed and worried.

**59 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - CHRISTY AND RICHMOND IN CLOSEUP - NIGHT 59**

looking at each other now, and she is smiling happily and looking at him and he is smiling happily and looking at her, and whatever was on his face just before has gone.

**60 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 60**

Luther, watching as they turn for the gigantic canopied bed.

**61 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 61**

The bed as they stop alongside it and kiss -- it's their first. And her arms go around his neck and she holds him like that, her eyes shut tight --

Luther -- watching because Richmond's eyes are not shut, they are wide open and they stare at the mirror and the awful look from before is back, only worse, and then without warning, he grips her buttocks roughly --

-- and slaps her hard on the ass, over and over and Christy is shocked, surprised, pulls away. Richmond smiles at her sweetly.

Christy. Shaking her head.

Richmond. He continues to smile, makes a courtly gesture, kissing her fingertips in apology.

(CONTINUED)

16.

Christy. She smiles in acknowledgement and they move onto the bed. She pushes him down and straddles him.

Richmond, from her POINT OF VIEW -- a wonderfully-handsome man.

Christy, from his POINT OF VIEW. A glorious, vibrant young woman. She smiles, touches her lips to a finger, reaches out, touches the finger to his mouth.

It's a sweet moment.

They smile.

Then he reaches up, and without a word, grabs her breasts and squeezes and twists them brutally and Christy is shocked and she tries to make him stop but he won't, and she cries out in pain but he still won't stop so she slaps him in the face. He slaps her back, viciously, right in the mouth and now there is blood mixing with her lipstick and she rolls off the bed onto the floor.

Christy sits there stunned.

**CHRISTY**

(slurred)

You fucking bastard.

And on that --

Richmond, standing now, reaches down to help her up. Christy hesitates, finally takes his hand and as soon as she is on her feet --

Christy, kicking him with all she has, in the stomach.

63 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 63

Luther, silently applauding.

64 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 64

Richmond, the air momentarily out of him, falling drunkenly to the floor, stunned for just a moment and clearly in pain, but he is a big man and he is strong and he grabs her ankle, yanks, and then both are laboring on the floor and Christy kicks him again and again --

-- but he will not release her ankle. Each kick only inflames his drunken rage.

(CONTINUED)

17.

64 CONTINUED: 64

RICHMOND

(very slurred --)

You little whore --

And now they both try and stand.

Neither one does it gracefully, neither one does it quickly, but Richmond gets there first and as soon as he is on his feet he begins to strangle her.

Christy, gasping, terrified, she claws at his arms, her fingers scratching deeply --

-- but he will not let go.

She twists and jerks her body --

-- no good -- he continues to tighten his grip on her throat --

-- and spreads his legs for better balance.

The bed table, as Christy, beyond desperation reaches around for something, anything -- her fingers finally close on the letter opener and in one wild stroke, she slashes his right arm.

Now he lets go. And stares, stunned, at his bleeding arm.

Then he crunches her flush in the mouth, a brutal blow,

and blood pours from her nose and mouth and if she weren't so scared, maybe it would have stopped her, but it doesn't -- because somehow she manages to maintain balance --

-- and knees him all she has, in the nuts.

It's over -- Richmond falls to the floor, helpless. He lies on his back, holding his crotch.

But it isn't over. Christy, blood pouring down her face, stands over him, the letter opener still tight in her hand.

And in her eyes you can see it, the homicidal rage --

-- and she drops to her knees beside him --

-- and Richmond can only lie there, watching her --

-- and she gets a better grip on the letter opener --

-- and Richmond still only lies there, watching her --

(CONTINUED)

18.

64 CONTINUED: (2)

64

-- and she raises the letter opener slowly very high above her head, the point aimed at his heart --

-- and Richmond screams one time --

-- and as Christy starts to kill him, two well-dressed men in business suits burst through the bedroom doorway, GUNS in their hands, and they BLOW HER BRAINS OUT before the opener reaches Richmond's heart...

65 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT

65

Luther, in SLOW MOTION and this is what he does --

-- he reels back in the chair, eyes wide, jaw slack, mouth open --

-- this is a man who has seen everything but nothing has prepared him for this --

-- his arms flop over the arms of the chair, his body loses strength, he tries to look away, can't --

-- and this is what he sees --

66 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 66

Christy, fighting for another instant of life --

-- no chance --

-- the two bullets have shattered her brain, her eyes roll up into her head, the letter opener drops to the rug, she collapses like a rag doll --

-- and blood is everywhere.

67 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 67

Luther. Back in regular motion now. Pale, barely able to breathe.

68 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 68

The two well-dressed men in business suits.

BILL BURTON is the more formidable. Mid-40s, he looks like a retired tight end. No body fat. Intimidating. But right now he is shaking and he can't stop it. He puts his gun away, goes to Richmond.

(CONTINUED)

19.

68 CONTINUED: 68

TIM COLLIN is closing in on 30. Handsome. In wonderful shape. Burton is more physical, Collin more lethal. He puts his gun away, goes to Christy.

Richmond is trying to sit. He is as drunk as before but now he is also close to shock. He reaches over, manages to pick up the bloody letter opener.

**RICHMOND**

Kill her?

Collin, by the body, nods.

**BURTON**

No choice in the matter.

His words are efficient but clearly, he has been rocked.

Richmond, staring stupidly at the letter opener. He drops it back to the floor, tries to stand, can't. Burton helps him back to the bed. Which is when he

passes out cold.

Burton and Collin look at each other now.

**BURTON**

Jesus, Tim, what did we do?

**COLLIN**

(echoing Burton)

No choice in the matter.

**69 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT**

**69**

Luther, staring at it all. The shock is still there but so is something new: anger. And on that --

**70 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**70**

GLORIA RUSSELL moving through the bedroom door. Russell's 40, well-dressed, attractive and very smart. Now she sees what's happened, stops dead.

Now she moves forward, looks at Burton and Collin. It's very clear from the outset: these three are not friendly.

**(CONTINUED)**

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20.

**70 CONTINUED:**

**70**

**RUSSELL**

(to Burton and Collin)

Do you realize what a shitstorm we're in?

(beat)

Go on -- tell me.

**COLLIN**

Nothing to tell. He screamed.

**RUSSELL**

And you heard no sounds of violence 'til then?

**BURTON**

(beat)

Nothing we haven't heard before.

Richmond, on the bed, out. Russell studies his face as Burton moves toward the telephone.

**BURTON**

Maybe I should call the police  
now.

**CLOSEUP - RUSSELL**

\*

**RUSSELL**

(soft)

Bill? Why don't you think about  
that?

(beat -- starting to  
move toward him)

Take a second and just think about  
that.

(closing in on Burton,  
furious)

Think... real... fucking... hard.

**BURTON**

\*

He is strong enough to snap her neck with one hand.

**BURTON**

(backing away)

Probably not a good idea.

**RUSSELL**

(taking charge)

Okay -- here's what happened  
tonight -- poor Christy came home  
alone and interrupted a burglary.  
That sound logical?

21.

71 **INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT**

71

Luther in the closet. He nods.

72 **INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

72

Burton and Collin nod, too.

**RUSSELL**

We're going to have to sanitize  
this place.

(shaking Richmond)

Alan, did you have sex with her?

Richmond, eyes barely open.

**RICHMOND**

... Don'... 'member...

**RUSSELL**

Bill, you're going to have to examine her.

**BURTON**

I'm no gynecologist.

**RUSSELL**

(she takes nothing  
from nobody)

I just made you one.

End of discussion.

**73 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)**

**73**

A clock on the side table beside the three clickers.

There is the sound of a VACUUM -- it's later now.

The place is incredibly changed. Christy is lying as before -- except now she is fully dressed. The bed has been made with clean sheets. There is a large black garbage bag that Collin shoves the sheets in, dumps in Christy's jewelry. Burton is VACUUMING the rug.

Richmond is visible, still in terrible shape, finishing putting his clothes on in the open master bedroom.

Everyone wears gloves.

Everything that is incriminating is gone --

(CONTINUED)

**22.**

**73 CONTINUED:**

**73**

-- except the letter opener, which has been put in a clear plastic bag. Collin reaches for it, starts to dump it in along with the sheets and the jewelry.

**RUSSELL**

I'll take that.

**COLLIN**

(surprised)

It's got their prints on it.

**RUSSELL**

(she holds out her  
hand)

Thanks for sharing.

Collin glances at Burton, shrugs, hands it over. Russell puts it in her handbag, puts the handbag on the bed table when suddenly --

Richmond, careening into the room, wide-eyed, crying out --

**RICHMOND**

Gloria -- I killed her --

Russell, turning, shocked as Richmond bears down --

-- she holds out her arms for him, but he is staggering and he collides hard with her, spins against the wall, uses the bed table to try to steady himself.

**74 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT**

**74**

Luther, stunned, staring.

**75 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**75**

What he's staring at: the letter opener has spilled from her open purse and fallen behind the bed, out of sight.

Russell, calm, going to Richmond, starting to lead him from the room --

**RUSSELL**

It's all going to be fine, Alan.

**RICHMOND**

... But she's dead...

**(CONTINUED)**

**23.**

**75 CONTINUED:**

**75**

**RUSSELL**

... I'll take care of everything just like I always do.

(to Burton and Collin)

Gentlemen?

She gestures to leave.

Burton and Collin finish up -- Collin grabs the large plastic bag. Burton glances around one final time and backs toward the door, vacuuming carefully. Then --

Collin stops dead. He stares across at the bed table.

76 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 76

Luther, holding his breath.

77 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - BURTON AND COLLIN - NIGHT 77

COLLIN

Shit.

BURTON

What?

In reply, Collin dashes back toward the bed table, grabs Russell's purse, snaps it shut, tucks it under one arm and leaves.

Burton flicks the light out, closes the door.

The room is lit by moonlight now. Christy looks beautiful and still. HOLD for a moment.

78 EXT. MANSION - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT 78

It's open and Russell leads a staggering Richmond outside. Two dark Towncars are parked in the driveway.

Burton is behind them, turning off all lights. Collin is last, with Russell's purse, the garbage bag. As he follows them outside, he closes the front door firmly -- it makes a loud, solid sound.

79 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - LUTHER - NIGHT 79

The sound is barely audible. He has been looking at his watch --

(CONTINUED)

24.

79 CONTINUED: 79

The watch face is illuminated in the darkness. The second hand is fifteen seconds away from the top.

Luther takes a deep breath, waits in silence.

The WATCH face: the sound is loud, like "60 Minutes."

80 EXT. SULLIVAN MANSION - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT 80

Burton and Russell moving with Richmond toward one of the cars. Burton takes the man in his arms, leaving Russell free to open the back door.

Collin dumps the plastic bag into the trunk, shuts it, moves quickly so that he can get a decent view of the road.

The road in front of the house. Empty. Collin hurries to the Towncar where Burton is struggling to get Richmond comfortably stretched out on the back seat.

**81 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT 81**

The second hand on Luther's watch hits the top and he moves into action.

-- He points the clicker at the door --

-- the door starts to swing open --

-- Luther, backpack in hand, strides quickly into the bedroom, turns, points the clicker again and as the door starts to swing shut -- Luther carefully tosses the clicker back inside.

**82 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - ARMCHAIR - NIGHT 82**

as the clicker lands -- dead-solid perfect --

**83 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 83**

Luther, in the bedroom, moving to the nightstand, carrying his backpack --

-- he slows as he circles the body of Christy Sullivan, looks sadly down at her, continues on as we MOVE TO...

(CONTINUED)

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**83 CONTINUED: 83**

The bed table. First, Luther opens the drawer and pockets the necklace. Tense, he kneels, probes behind the table, reaches farther and then -- the letter opener! In the plastic bag. Luther grabs it.

\*  
\*

He rises, opener in hand, and goes to the far window that has a view of the front of the house. He looks out, grimaces.

84      **EXT. SULLIVAN MANSION - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT**      84

The cars are still there. Burton is visible helping Russell in. Collin hands over her purse, closes the door. He and Burton move to the front doors.

85      **INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**      85

Luther, going to the rear window. He opens the window slowly and silently. He ties one end of the rope around the leg of a heavy, wooden chest of drawers --

-- now he carefully plays the knotted rope out the window.

86      **EXT. SULLIVAN DRIVEWAY - TOWNCAR - NIGHT**      86

Collin heads to one of the Towncars. In the other Burton and Russell are getting settled in the front. Richmond lies in a stupor, stretched along the rear seat. Russell --

-- a moment of relief. She breathes deep.      And as Russell starts to open her purse --

87      **EXT. SULLIVAN MANSION - KNOTTED ROPE - NIGHT**      87

as it snakes down the brick mansion -- it reaches the ground.

88      **INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**      88

Luther, putting his backpack on securely.

The window -- Luther glances out and down.

89      **HIS POV - GROUND OUTSIDE SULLIVAN MANSION - NIGHT**      89

Forty feet below.      And it's dark.

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90      **INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**      90

Luther -- he doesn't much like this -- but taking hold of the rope, he puts one leg out the window -- only the damn backpack makes it complicated and he's caught for a moment, clumsily trapped with one leg in, one leg out and the backpack wedged against the corner of the window --





Collin, looking around the table and the letter opener is gone.

**COLLIN**

Shit!

And without another word, they bolt out the door.

**107 EXT. SULLIVAN MANSION - GROUNDS - NIGHT 107**

Luther, crashing through the field. He is in wonderful shape --

-- for a man his age.

And he gives it all he has but is it going to be enough?

**108 EXT. SULLIVAN DRIVEWAY - NIGHT 108**

The Towncar as Collin yanks something out of the glove compartment, and then he is racing off into the night after Burton who is a few steps ahead.

**109 EXT. SULLIVAN DRIVEWAY/INT. TOWNCAR - NIGHT 109 \***

Russell staring after them -- in the back seat, Richmond is in a half-slumber.

**110 EXT. SULLIVAN MANSION - GROUNDS - NIGHT 110**

Luther, bursting out of the underbrush --

-- up ahead is the most dangerous place for him --

-- one hundred yards of open field. He runs on.

**111 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - BURTON AND COLLIN - NIGHT 111**

as Collin catches up to the other man, tosses what he took from the glove compartment.

Thermal goggles.

They put them on, on the fly and...

29.

**112 THERMAL POV 112**

The world ahead of them as they see it: their FIELD OF VISION now resembles a rough computer game. THERMAL

IMAGES register in red, everything else is dark green.

**113 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - OPEN AREA - LUTHER - NIGHT 113**

Beginning to tire now -- and he's only halfway through the open field and...

Burton and Collin, behind him, can't see him yet, but they are moving faster --

-- and Burton could probably destroy anyone in a fight --

-- but Collin can fly.

And he begins to leave Burton behind.

Luther, and twenty yards ahead of him are some woods that spur him on, he pumps his arms, his body straining and his breath coming in gasps and...

Collin, graceful and young and in fabulous shape and just ahead is the open field and as he starts into it --

**114 THERMAL POV 114**

What Collin sees: a THERMAL figure; a man running out of the open and then disappearing into the woods.

**115 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - OPEN AREA - NIGHT 115**

The sight of the figure is enough to kick Collin into overdrive and he has never run this fast as he crosses the open area.

**116 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - WOODS - NIGHT 116**

Luther, running through the woods -- he can hear THEM now, and he knows they're closing on him and he glances back --

-- and smashes into a fucking tree!... hard... and it rocks him, drops him to his knees --

**117 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - OPEN AREA - NIGHT 117**

Collin and he could be jet propelled.

30.

**118 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - WOODS - NIGHT 118**

Luther, forcing himself back to his feet and running again, giving it everything he has left and he's dodging through the trees now.

**119 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - NEAR WOODS - NIGHT 119**

Burton, behind Collin, but he draws his gun anyway --  
Collin, in the woods, and his gun's drawn too --  
Luther, out of the woods and now his car is visible --  
Collin, in the woods but they're coming to an end.

**120 THERMAL POV 120**

The figure up ahead is approaching a car.

**121 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - LUTHER'S CAR - NIGHT 121**

Luther, throwing the car door open, ripping off his backpack, tossing it inside, jumping in behind the wheel.

**122 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - WOODS - NIGHT 122**

Burton. Pulling up, gasping terribly. He sinks to one knee.

Collin, out of the woods! -- Still amazingly without the least sign of tiring --

-- and now there is a sound: a CAR MOTOR STARTING.

**123 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - LUTHER'S CAR - NIGHT 123**

Luther in his car, wheels spinning.

**124 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - WOODS - NIGHT 124**

Collin has his pistol ready but it's impossible to hit anything when you're running like this.

**125 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS/INT. LUTHER'S CAR - NIGHT 125**

Luther, in the car, GUNNING AWAY.

31.

**126 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - WOODS - NIGHT 126**

Collin. Slowing.

127 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - LUTHER'S CAR - NIGHT 127

The car. A swirl of dust.

The dust clears.

The car rounds a corner, is gone.

128 EXT. SULLIVAN GROUNDS - NIGHT 128

Collin. He stands there, rips off his thermal goggles --  
-- and surprisingly, he smiles.

Burton, getting to his feet, his breath still not steady.  
He takes his goggles off too as Collin approaches.

**COLLIN**

(still the smile)  
I got his license number.

Now on that --

129 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 129

Russell -- back in the bedroom, with Burton and Collin  
who are moving around constantly, checking the place out.  
Things are just amazingly tense.

**RUSSELL**

(close to losing it)  
Gee, guys, maybe it was the  
bogeyman -- don't forget to check  
under the bed --  
(exploding)  
-- You may have buried us! --

**COLLIN**

-- relax, I got his license  
number, remember? --

**RUSSELL**

(whirling on him)  
-- you think he's going to just  
sit around waiting for us? --  
Asshole --

**COLLIN**

-- take it easy, Miss Russell --

(CONTINUED)

32.

129 CONTINUED:

129

**BURTON**

(trying for calm)  
-- everybody shut up, all right?

He is staring at his reflection in the big mirror. He  
crosses to it, goes to his knees, studies the rug.

The rug -- indentations in the expensive carpet.

**BURTON**

Oh boy...

Burton and Collin with a crowbar, working at the mirror.

The MIRROR; there is a TEAR and a POP and it swings open.

130 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - NIGHT

130

All three going inside, looking around. The chair, the  
looted shelves. The truth thuds home.

Russell turns, looks out at the bedroom through the door.

**RUSSELL**

(dead)  
A two-way mirror.

Silently, they move out into the bedroom.

131 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

131

**COLLIN**

-- I better get cracking on that  
license number --

**RUSSELL**

(no anger now)  
-- it's all we've got -- and he's  
got the letter opener -- blood,  
fingerprints -- Jesus, think what  
he can do --

**BURTON**

(a powerful man who  
speaks softly)  
-- the man is a thief -- a thief  
who witnessed a murder --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

33.

131 CONTINUED:

131

BURTON (CONT'D)

(gesturing around)

-- it looks like he stole a whole bunch of money -- I'll tell you what he's going to do.

(beat)

He's going to run like hell.

And on that --

132 INT. WASHINGTON MUSEUM - DAY

132

The saddest eyes you ever saw.

It's the next morning and Luther is back at the same old stand, looking at El Greco. The other art students are there too. So are the suburban housewives.

Everything is as it was -- calm and peaceful --

-- now a museum guard moves into the doorway, scanning the room.

Luther -- a quick glance over, then back to his sketchbook -- and from that glance it's clear all is not calm and peaceful.

The guard checks the room again.

Edgy, Luther still works away.

The guard leaves.

Luther gets set to do the same.

133 INT. RED'S BAR - DAY

133

Red, alone in his empty bar, sipping coffee. It's before the place has opened for the day.

Luther comes in the back. Red slides the videocassette over, Luther pockets it.

RED

Jordan beat us at the buzzer.

LUTHER

Bad night.

And as he turns, goes --

34.

134 EXT. JOGGING PARK - PARKING AREA - DAY

134

A YOUNG WOMAN parking her car -- a high rocky area above the Potomac. Below, a jogging path is visible, full of runners.

The Young Woman gets out, locks her car, starts down a narrow walk toward the joggers.

She's in her mid-thirties. A good face. And there's something familiar about her.

135 EXT. JOGGING PARK - DAY

135

Luther, standing by the edge of the jogging path, studying the runners. Now he registers something: and smiles.

The Woman in her mid-thirties as she comes jogging along. She runs well.

Luther. An imperceptible straightening of his clothes.

The jogger. We realize who she is: the little girl in the photo on Luther's dining room table. All grown up. Now her face registers something: his presence. Her eyes go down to the path, she increases her speed.

Luther. Waving, calling out.

**LUTHER**

Kate.

(as she runs on)

Kate.

She slows, hesitates, stops.

Kate, hands on hips, breathing deeply, moving to the edge of the path as he approaches. The river flows behind them. Runners pass by.

Beat.

**LUTHER**

Probably too late for me to take it up.

She says nothing -- he gestures toward the path.

**LUTHER**

The jogging.

**KATE (YOUNG WOMAN)**

Ahh.

(CONTINUED)

35.

135 CONTINUED:

135

Beat.

**LUTHER**

Dumb way to start this, I guess.

Beat.

**LUTHER**

Wanted to talk to you.

**KATE**

About?

**LUTHER**

Believe it or not, the weather.

(as she waits)

Nights are starting to get cold.

**KATE**

That happens this time of year.

Luther speaks quickly now, his voice low.

**LUTHER**

I was thinking of maybe  
relocating. Someplace with a  
kinder climate.

(nothing shows on  
her face)

I just wanted to check it out with  
you first...

(still nothing)

... you're the only family I've  
got.

And on that --

Kate speaks quickly now, her voice low.

**KATE**

Luther, you don't have me.

The last words in this world he wanted to hear, but you  
can't tell from his face.

**LUTHER**

Kate --

**KATE**

-- you know what it's like being  
the only kid in show and tell who  
got to talk about visiting day?

(CONTINUED)

36.

135 CONTINUED: (2)

135

**LUTHER**

This move -- I'm talking  
permanent, you understand.

**KATE**

We don't see each other anyway --  
we haven't seen each other since  
Mom died and that's a year.

(a step toward him)

Look, you chose your life. You  
had that right. You were never  
around for me. Fine. But I have  
no plans to be around for you.

And now she stops, turns away toward the path --

-- Luther can say nothing, watches her --

-- then she spins back --

**KATE**

(louder now)

-- wait a minute -- you're lying  
about something, aren't you? --

**LUTHER**

-- no --

**KATE**

-- are you active again? -- is  
that why you're here now?

**LUTHER**

-- no --

Kate moves in close now --

**KATE**

-- I don't believe you --

(big)

-- Christ, Father, what have you

done?

And on those words --

**136 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - DAY**

**136**

Christy Sullivan's body.

We're back in the master bedroom but now there is a lot of police activity -- people work around the corpse. The place is covered with black fingerprint powder.

**(CONTINUED)**

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37.

**136 CONTINUED:**

**136**

SETH FRANK moves into the room -- Bogart at 40. Chief Homicide Detective of Middleton County, Virginia but he had a decade of top work in New York City. Bright, funny, and tough enough for anything you want to throw at him.

He kneels beside the body next to an older man. This is the MEDICAL EXAMINER, fat and bored. Seth studies Christy; sadly shakes his head.

**SETH**

Christy Sullivan?

**MEDICAL EXAMINER**

(nods)

Wife of Walter -- most likely came home and stumbled onto a burglary --

**WOMAN (O.S.)**

-- some burglary.

LAURA SIMON. Laura is early 30s, and the best lab technician Seth has ever known, and he knew some good ones in New York.

**LAURA SIMON**

I wish my carpets were this clean. And I can't find a single decent fingerprint.

\*

**SETH**

You serious, Laura?

**LAURA SIMON**

(bewildered)

It's like Mary Poppins was here.

**SETH**

Could someone have let him in?

**LAURA SIMON**

Sorry, Seth, but the entire Sullivan household went to Barbados two days ago.

**SETH**

Thank you for your support.

(CONTINUED)

38.

136 CONTINUED: (2)

136

**LAURA SIMON**

Wait -- it gets worse --  
(moving to the door)  
-- the shots came from here. If she interrupted a burglary, she should have been here --  
(moving to the bed now)  
-- she was killed where she is -- all the blood patterns indicate that. But she was looking toward the bed -- what in hell was she looking at?

137 INT. SULLIVAN VAULT - DAY

137

Seth says nothing as he and Laura go in the vault. Seth stares at the chair.

Seth

**LAURA SIMON**

Looks like someone sat here -- but I couldn't find any prints.  
(lowering her voice -- indicating the one-way mirror)  
You think Sullivan holed up in the chair and watched his wife perform?

**SETH**

I hope not --  
(shakes his head)  
-- he's such a great man.

He moves back into the bedroom.

138 INT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

138

Another cop is working on the wall by the bed table where a hole the size and shape of a bullet is visible.

**SETH**

(as he moves past)  
Careful digging that out.

The cop nods.

**MEDICAL EXAMINER**

Looks like he tried to strangle her.

(CONTINUED)

39.

138 CONTINUED:

138

**SETH**

So he tried to strangle her, then went to the door and shot her from behind?

**MEDICAL EXAMINER**

He also inspected her vagina.

Seth. Stunned.

**SETH**

He did what? Why?

**LAURA SIMON**

Maybe he couldn't remember if he fucked her.

**SETH**

(has to laugh)  
A strong burglar with a weak mind -- obviously another open and shut case...

As he stares around, baffled.

139 EXT. LUTHER'S SAFE HOUSE APT. BUILDING - DAY

139

A high rise. It's in a different part of Washington than we've seen thus far. Afternoon now.

An old salesman type is trudging into the building. He's slumped, carries heavy salesman type suitcases. He wears a battered hat. As he goes inside --

140 INT. BUILDING - FOYER/MAIL AREA - DAY 140

The salesman is opening a mail slot with the name "Hawthorne" on the outside. A good bit of mail, most of it unsolicited. Hawthorne pockets it, unlocks the foyer, heads toward the elevator.

141 INT. BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY 141

The elevator and Hawthorne slowly getting out, heading toward a corner apartment, taking out some keys --

-- there are three locks on the door... he takes out keys --

40.

142 INT. LUTHER'S SAFE HOUSE APARTMENT - DAY 142

Hawthorne walks in, puts the suitcases down, flings his hat toward a long sofa --

-- it's Luther and this, we will come to learn, is what he keeps as his safe house. It's neatly furnished, modern and clean.

Now he moves quickly --

-- first he opens a suitcase -- it contains his full backpack from the robbery --

-- then he opens a locked closet door, revealing a very large and sophisticated safe. As he begins to work the dial --

143 INT. LUTHER'S SAFE HOUSE APARTMENT - DAY (LATER) 143

-- the TV ON in the living room as he slides the video cassette Red gave him into his machine. Everything has been put away.

The TV as Michael Jordan is introduced to the crowd --

Luther sits, nurses a beer, watches intently...

144 INT. MORGUE - DAY 144

An old man silently weeping.

This is WALTER SULLIVAN, one of the giants of the era. A self-made billionaire. Remarkably, the man has few enemies.

At 80, his body may be betraying him -- he was once handsome -- but his mind is that of a young man.

We've seen him before -- in the wedding picture on the wall of his mansion. With his young bride Christy.

He is with her again now, at the morgue. A sheet covers her body. The toe tag is visible. Walter, shattered and desolate, stares at her once joyous face.

PULL BACK to reveal --

**145 INT. MORGUE - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

**145**

Seth Frank, studying Walter THROUGH a two way mirror. Seth is moved at depth of the old man's grief. Anyone would be. Walter slowly rises --

**41.**

**146 INT. MORGUE - DAY**

**146**

SANDY LORD waiting in an anteroom as Walter enters...

Sandy Lord is Walter Sullivan's lawyer. He is 60, abrasive, powerful.

Sandy moves to Walter, gestures toward the front door. Seth appears through another door, intercepts them.

**SETH**

Mr. Sullivan? -- I'm Seth Frank, senior homicide detective for Middleton County --

**SANDY LORD**

(protectively)  
-- my client is in no mood for conversation, sir.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

It's all right, Sandy --  
(looks at Seth)  
-- you're in charge of the case?

**SETH**

(nods)  
I have to ask some questions, but it can be tomorrow.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

You want what, positive identification? Yes, that was my wife. Anything else?

**SETH**

(notebook in hand)  
You'd been in Barbados for two days?

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(nods)  
I took the entire staff down -- always do this time of year.

**SETH**

But Mrs. Sullivan didn't come.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

She was, had it all planned, but you know women, they change their minds.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

42.

146 CONTINUED:

146

**WALTER SULLIVAN (CONT'D)**

(to Seth, softly)  
I'd been married to my Rebecca for forty-seven years and when she died, I decided I never wanted that pain again. One thing I knew about Christy: she was going to outlive me.

**SANDY LORD**

I think that's enough for today.

Takes Walter's arm.

**SETH**

(beat)  
I have to ask about the vault.

And on that -- Walter. Holds to Sandy for a moment, then lets go.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

You mean the contents of the vault of course --  
(turns to Sandy)  
-- Sandy, you go on, I'm all right.  
(as Sandy looks at him a moment)  
Really. Go to the reception -- obviously I can't make it, but I'm

sure everyone will understand.

Sandy nods, exits. Seth and Walter are alone.

Beat. Then --

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

I know it's not the contents --  
(as Seth embarrassed,  
stands there)  
You mean the chair. You have to  
ask about the chair.

**SETH**

(soft)  
Yessir, I do.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

But why? Are they connected?

**(CONTINUED)**

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43.

146 CONTINUED: (2)

146

**SETH**

I think someone sat in it -- and I  
think that someone may have been  
involved in the murder.

(beat)

You were my father's hero, Mr.  
Sullivan, I promise you this won't  
make my highlight reel.

**CLOSEUP - WALTER**

\*

Humiliated.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

I'd hoped I could satisfy her...  
but you know... she had needs and  
she didn't want to go behind my  
back... she suggested the chair...  
she hoped I might get to like  
sitting there...

(beat)

... I didn't...

(takes a breath)

I've tried for eighty years to  
live a decent life. I've given a  
billion dollars to charity. If  
this comes to trial, none of that  
will be remembered -- I'll just go  
out as the joke of the world.

Seth. He closes his notebook.

**SETH**

I understand, sir; I'll do what I  
can.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(beat)

Will you listen to me whine?  
Please forgive me, Mr. Frank.  
Just do your job.

(beat)

And I'll do mine.

Walter slowly moves to the door. Seth watches him.  
Sadly...

**147 EXT. WHITE HOUSE - MAGIC HOUR**

**147**

A gorgeous SHOT of a very famous place. The sun is  
setting. It all looks magical.

**44.**

**148 INT. WHITE HOUSE - NORTH PORTICO - NIGHT**

**148**

A room filled with well-dressed men and women. Formal  
attire. The rich and the famous. But the only one we  
recognize is Sandy Lord, deep in conversation with  
several other men. Now, someone says his name.

**MAN (O.S.)**

Sandy.

(as Sandy turns)

Is there anything I can do?

**SANDY LORD**

Mr. President.

And on those words -- The 44th President of the United  
States. He has all the natural charm in the world. He  
is remarkably bright, with a phenomenal memory. He is,  
also, at this moment, one of the most popular men in  
American history, three years into a brilliant first  
term, a shoo-in for re-election when that ritual comes.

His name, by the way, is Alan Richmond, and we've seen  
him before, most recently lying drunk in the back seat of  
a dark Towncar.

**RICHMOND**

Take a walk with me.

He and Sandy start out of the room. A well-dressed woman

moves with them. She is Chief of Staff and her name is **GLORIA RUSSELL**.

Two men in suits follow behind. Burton and Collin are their names and they are the best the Secret Service has to offer.

**149 INT. WHITE HOUSE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

**149**

The group, as they leave the room, come to a wide corridor.

**RICHMOND**

Tell me about Walter -- how is he?

**SANDY LORD**

Eighty and alone, Mr. President.

**RICHMOND**

He understands officially my hands are tied?

**SANDY LORD**

Mr. President, he's touched at your concern.

**(CONTINUED)**

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

45.

**149 CONTINUED:**

**149**

**RICHMOND**

Any news of the killer?

(as Sandy indicates  
"no")

Well, why isn't there? Who's in charge of the case?

**SANDY LORD**

Top man -- eight years homicide work in New York. But I understand how you feel -- it's hard to be patient.

**RICHMOND**

(terribly upset)

No one understands how I feel -- I'm supposed to have all this power but I can't help my oldest friend -- you know and I know that more than any man alive Walter Sullivan put me here -- and now when he most needs me, he must feel abandoned.

**CLOSEUP - RICHMOND**

\*

On fire --

**RICHMOND**

-- I'll hold a press conference --  
and I'll have Walter come -- and I  
will embrace him before the world.

Sandy. Listening. Moved.

**SANDY LORD**

He'll treasure that, Mr.  
President. What a generous  
gesture. Thank you. Thank you.

And he reaches out, shakes Richmond's hand, squeezes  
Richmond's arm and -- Richmond -- suddenly screaming in  
pain -- Sandy pulls back, shocked. Richmond looks  
embarrassed.

**RICHMOND**

(quick smile)  
Damn tennis elbow is killing me.

And on that --

46.

150 **INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT**

150

Richmond, immediately after, and he sure isn't smiling  
now -- he storms toward the Oval Office, Russell, Burton  
and Collin hurrying to keep up.

151 **INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT**

151

Burton opens the door for them, closes it once they're  
inside.

**RICHMOND**

(throws off his jacket,  
turns on Russell)  
This thing's worse, Gloria. I  
need to see a doctor.

**RUSSELL**

The country would have to be  
informed, Mr. President.

**RICHMOND**

What happened to my right to  
privacy?

(rolls up his sleeve,  
studies his cut)  
I think she nicked a tendon.

**RUSSELL**

Burton says it's a flesh wound --

**RICHMOND**

(to Burton)  
-- when did you become such an  
expert, Bill? -- Ever been  
wounded? --

**BURTON**

(quietly)  
Yes, sir. Many times.

The fireplace. Richmond goes to it, rubs his arm, stares  
at the flames.

**RUSSELL**

Are you serious about that press  
conference, Alan?

**RICHMOND**

Of course I am -- Walter's been  
like a father to me.

**RUSSELL**

Shall I bring Mrs. Richmond home  
for it?

(CONTINUED)

47.

151 CONTINUED:

151

Richmond, turning from the fire now, quietly.

**RICHMOND**

I think Mrs. Richmond's mission to  
help the poor in Asia should not  
be interrupted.

(takes a breath,  
starts to button  
his shirt)

We know anything yet?

**RUSSELL**

We checked his license plate -- he  
stole the car from a police  
impoundment lot.

**RICHMOND**

We're not dealing with a fool

here.  
(gestures toward his  
jacket, as Russell  
helps him into it)  
Has he initiated contact?

**RUSSELL**

Burton doesn't think he will.

**RICHMOND**

I agree.  
(checking himself  
in a mirror)  
Sorry about my behavior -- won't  
happen again; think of it as a  
blip on the screen. And as far as  
I'm concerned, so is he.

**RUSSELL**

He could be a little more than  
that, Alan -- he saw.

Richmond. Big.

**RICHMOND**

He saw nothing -- a drunk woman  
who liked rough sex too much. And  
he's a burglar. Who's going to  
believe him?  
(beat)  
After all, it's not as if he had  
evidence or anything...

And on those words --

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 48.

**152 INT. LUTHER'S SAFE HOUSE APARTMENT - LETTER OPENER - NIGHT 152**

Luther holds it. It's the middle of the night. Luther  
turns the weapon over and over in his big hands...

**153 EXT. WHITE HOUSE REAR GATE - NIGHT (LITTLE LATER) 153 \***

Burton is alone in his car, exiting the gate and driving  
home. He turns onto the main road. \*

**154 EXT. STREET NEAR WHITE HOUSE/INT. BURTON'S CAR - NIGHT 154**

He picks up speed. Glances around -- no cars are  
following.

Burton reaches into his pocket, takes out a MICRO-

CASSETTE RECORDER, flicks it ON.

**RICHMOND (V.O.)**

What happened to my right to  
privacy?

(beat)

I think she nicked a tendon.

Burton clicks the cassette off, puts it back into his  
pocket. Drives into the night...

**155 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - TINY KITCHEN - DAY**

**155**

A stove with one burner on high. A tea kettle is over  
the flame.

It is morning and Kate is clearly not fully awake. She  
is finishing making instant coffee with lowfat milk and  
Sweet 'n Low; next she goes to the front door of her  
apartment, opens it, picks up the morning Washington  
Post.

She unfolds the paper as she starts back to the  
kitchen --

**INSERT - WASHINGTON POST**

Huge headlines -- as big as you can get without a war.

**WALTER SULLIVAN'S WIFE MURDERED**

**(CONTINUED)**

**49.**

**155 CONTINUED:**

**155**

**BACK TO SCENE**

Kate looks at it only a moment, shakes her head, then  
starts to turn her attention to another section of the  
paper --

-- she doesn't get that far.

Kate: she has seen something she didn't catch before --

The front page again. And the headline is still there --

-- but there is a smaller headline beneath it:

**Jewel Thief Sought**

Kate sits down hard. Trying for control. Entering a



**LUTHER**

You mean I've got a weak face.  
Thanks, Val.

**VALERIE**

You're lucky is all -- some of my  
customers, they stand out no  
matter what.

An order form book. Valerie licks a pencil with her  
tongue.

**VALERIE**

How many passports you need?

**LUTHER**

(thinks)  
Four should cover it.

**VALERIE**

(writes this down)  
Now you'll want different looks,  
and matching international  
driver's licenses -- I'll throw in  
some dummy credit cards, seeing  
it's you. How the rugs I made you  
holding up?

**LUTHER**

They're good. Beards and  
mustaches, too.

**VALERIE**

(pleased)  
I try to give value for money.  
Leaving the country permanent?

**LUTHER**

It may come to that.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

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157 CONTINUED: (2)

157

**VALERIE**

Matter where you've been? -- I  
hate doing those goddam Asian  
passport stamps.

**LUTHER**

Europe's fine. Maybe the  
Caribbean for winters. When can I  
pick up?

**VALERIE**

Usually takes some time, but for you, I'll rush it.

**LUTHER**

Thanks, Val. I've always been able to count on you.

Valerie puts the order book down, studies him.

**LUTHER**

What?

**VALERIE**

I don't want to know what you're into, but leaving forever...

**LUTHER**

Finish it.

**VALERIE**

I never figured you for a runner -- thirty percent of my runners kill themselves within five years.

**LUTHER**

(kisses her forehead)

Five years doesn't sound so bad to me just now.

And as he heads out --

**158 INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - CRIMINAL LAB - DAY**

**158**

Seth and Laura in the good-sized criminal lab. Loaded with up-to-date equipment.

Seth has drawn a picture of the crime scene. Words like "Bedroom Door," "Exit Window," "Vault," "Bed," "Victim" are written neatly to scale. He holds a sheaf of papers.

\*

**(CONTINUED)**

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

52.

**158 CONTINUED:**

**158**

It's late afternoon and things are already getting crazed. NOISE in the b.g. throughout.

**SETH**

See if any of this makes sense.

Seth mimes opening the "bedroom door," stepping inside,

closing it. He makes a click with his tongue.

**SETH**

I am Christy Sullivan and I walk  
in and surprise a burglar.

Seth moves to the "vault door," mimes closing that, makes  
a grunt.

**LAURA**

Now you're the burglar coming out  
of the vault and being surprised.

**SETH**

Gold star.  
(aims his finger like  
a pistol)  
I draw my gun --

**LAURA**

(cutting in)  
-- then why do you bother to  
strangle her when you could just  
shoot?

**SETH**

That's nothing -- why do I bother  
to have her strip and then put her  
clothes back on?

**LAURA**

There I can help you -- see,  
before you were a burglar you were  
a dry cleaner and you still love  
beautiful clothes.

**SETH**

And I dress her because?

**LAURA**

She was a good customer and you  
didn't want her embarrassed when  
the police came.

(CONTINUED)

\*

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

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158 CONTINUED: (2)

158 \*

**CLOSEUP - SETH**

Frustrated.

**SETH**

She had a point-21 blood alcohol

level. -- she was too drunk to drive. I've checked every cab and limo company in the area and not one of them knows anything. Someone drove her home. Goddamit, who? And why haven't they come forward?

**LAURA**

Maybe whoever drove her home killed her.

**SETH**

You saying the burglar drove her home?

(pissed)

I hate this case.

An open door behind them. A TELEPHONE REPAIRMAN appears. Nice looking kid with a dazzling smile.

**TELEPHONE REPAIRMAN**

Lieutenant? -- sorry to bother you  
--

(as Seth turns)

I've got your phone working again, shouldn't give you any more trouble.

**SETH**

Good service, thanks.

**TELEPHONE REPAIRMAN**

(dazzling smile  
as he goes)

Part of the job.

Seth and Laura. Seth's lost his train of thought. Then --

**SETH**

Oh yeah -- remember that bullet hole in the wall? Had the lab dig out the slug -- guess what -- no slug -- why does the burglar take the time to do that?

**LAURA**

Different from the one in her body?

(CONTINUED)

(getting more and  
more upset)

Oh I like that a lot -- two  
different guns means two different  
burglars. Two guys broke in? And  
they both went out the window?  
Bullshit.

(big)

And oh, by the way, why does he --  
or they -- go out the window in  
the first place when he -- or they  
-- got in by breaking a zillion-  
dollar security system? --

**COP (O.S.)**

-- Seth?

**SETH**

(whirling)

What?

**COP**

(in doorway)

A Bill Burton of the Secret  
Service in the parking lot.

**SETH**

(gives papers to  
Laura)

Here, you solve the goddam thing.

(as he starts away)

Did I mention that I hate this  
case? I really truly hate this  
case -- you cannot imagine how  
much I hate it --

159 **EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT - DAY**

159

Burton waits by his car as Seth walks up.

**BURTON**

(as they shake)

Bill Burton, hi --

**SETH**

-- hi, Seth Frank --

**BURTON**

-- I know you must be going crazy  
-- but the boss is very interested  
in your progress. Maybe we can  
help each other.

**(CONTINUED)**

**SETH**

What did you have in mind?

**BURTON**

You know how close he and Sullivan are?

(as Seth nods)

The minute anything breaks, if you'd call me, I'd tell the President. That way, he'd be the first to alert Mr. Sullivan -- it would mean a lot to him. And any red tape you want cut -- done.

(as he takes out card)

Here are my numbers.

He turns, opens his front car door.

**BURTON**

(getting in)

Leads?

**SETH**

Still trying to figure out what might have happened --

**BURTON**

-- I loved playing Sherlock Holmes.

**SETH**

(surprised)

You Secret Service guys do that?

**BURTON**

I was State Trooper here ten years ago before the Government got me.

Seth. It just pops out.

**SETH**

You're that Bill Burton.

Burton. Embarrassed.

**BURTON**

I was younger and dumber then.

(quickly)

Keep in touch.

Seth waves as Burton drives away.

**160 EXT. STREET NEAR POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY 160**

Burton. He drives alertly along, turns a corner. Up ahead, a telephone repair truck has stopped. The Repairman leans out. He has a dazzling smile. He and Burton wave to each other...

**161 INT. SULLIVAN DINING ROOM - NIGHT 161 \***

Quietly elegant. Two men are finishing dinner. Walter Sullivan we know.

MICHAEL McCARTY, his dinner companion, is 35, fit, handsome, beautifully dressed. He is, at present, torn by a silver tray of small French pastries.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(noting McCarty's temptation)

The chef makes them especially for me -- I promise you they're sinful.

McCarty grabs one, downs it, grins sheepishly.

**McCARTY**

You're a salesman, Mr. Sullivan.

Sullivan nods as they rise.

**162 INT. SULLIVAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 162 \***

Tastefully appointed, as one would expect.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

This is a new arena for me, but from what I'm told, you have a flawless reputation, Mister McCarty -- which is why I need to employ you.

**McCARTY**

Understood.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

I have no idea who I'm after. Until I do, you will have to wait in Washington for instructions.

**(CONTINUED)**

162 CONTINUED:

162

McCARTY

Out of the question, I'm afraid.  
(explaining as they  
walk)

Mine isn't particularly creative  
work -- I only do it because I  
enjoy living beyond my means. I  
can't afford to just sit around.

A sofa. Walter gestures for them to sit.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

When I was 10 my father died -- he  
was a miner and lung disease  
killed him. I became rich at 25  
and the first thing I did was  
purchase that mine, close it, and  
give every miner there fifty  
thousand dollars to retire on.

(beat; staring at  
McCarty now)

You will come to Washington, Mr.  
McCarty. You will put one million  
dollars expenses into the Swiss  
bank account of your choosing.

(beat)

And, when the time comes, two  
million dollars a bullet.

McCARTY

(smiles, nods)

You are a salesman, sir.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

Selling sin is easy...

Now, sharply...

CUT TO:

163 INT. SETH'S OFFICE - CLOSEUP - OLD MUG SHOT OF LUTHER -  
DAY

163

PULL BACK to reveal...

... Seth and Laura, in his office.  
his desk, along with some folders.

The mug shot is on  
Seth beckons to her.

**LAURA**

(studying photo)

Who is he?

(CONTINUED)

58.

163 CONTINUED:

163

**SETH**

Luther Whitney --

(beat)

-- one of the great thieves of the world.

Seth. The words pour out.

**SETH**

Been going nuts with this thing, up all night and I remembered your notion how it might be two burglars, and around dawn I thought, wait, what if it wasn't two burglars but what if it was one guy trying to throw us off by making it look like two?

(faster)

Called a buddy at the Bureau -- they keep track of this stuff internationally -- he says maybe only a half a dozen guys alive could have pulled off the Sullivan job -- I'm tracing all six --

(beat)

-- but Whitney's the only one lives in Washington.

Laura. Looking at Seth now. Starting to get excited, too.

**LAURA**

Why haven't I ever heard of him?

**SETH**

Because he hasn't been arrested in thirty years.

**LAURA**

(indicating mug shot)

This his graduation picture from Harvard?

**SETH**

(waving her off)

Ancient history -- he wasn't a jewel thief back then. Just a kid, just part of a gang, a three-time loser. But since he got out

the last time, he's only worked  
alone --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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163 CONTINUED: (2)

163

**SETH (CONT'D)**

(beat)  
-- and no one's touched him.  
(shakes his head)  
He gets questioned whenever  
anything big comes up. But  
nothing sticks.

**LAURA**

(really excited now)  
Seth -- we can make this stick --  
I'll bet you anything this is our  
guy -- a local? -- can't ask for  
more --

**SETH**

(makes a face)  
We've got a problem.

\*  
\*  
\*

**LAURA**

-- what? --

\*

**SETH**

Whitney hasn't killed anyone in 45  
years.

Laura doesn't get it.

**SETH**

Korea.

**LAURA**

Big deal, so he's a veteran.

**SETH**

Not just a veteran -- a wounded  
veteran.

(indicating folder)  
Got his combat record here.  
Battles, commendations,  
decorations up the kazoo.  
Lives alone on his disability.  
Says he does anyway.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

(glum)  
And I don't do war heroes...

CUT TO:

164 EXT. WASHINGTON MUSEUM - DAY 164

Luther -- it's a beautiful morning now and he's walking up the steps to the art museum. He seems in a terrific mood as he goes inside --

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 59A.

164 CONTINUED: 164

-- HOLD.

Seth has been on the steps of the museum, watching him. Now quickly --

165 INT. WASHINGTON MUSEUM - DAY 165

Luther, inside, peering back out at Seth. And he doesn't seem in as terrific a mood now. He hesitates, keeps on going.

60.

166 EXT. WASHINGTON MUSEUM - DAY 166

Seth. Outside -- and he knows Luther was watching.

167 INT. WASHINGTON MUSEUM - DAY 167

El Greco. The usual group has gathered, sketching away. Luther is deeply engrossed in his labors.

Seth enters the room, casually taking it all in. He approaches the group, ends up behind Luther who is intent on getting the hands right.

LUTHER

(not looking)

Boy, you must be smart.

SETH

(really taken aback)

Sorry?

LUTHER

Usually takes a week for you guys to get to me.

(turns, smiles)

You look just like your picture,

Seth. I'm Luther Whitney.

He reaches out to shake a surprised Seth's hand --

168 INT. MUSEUM - COFFEE SHOP - DAY

168

They walk in, go to the food line. There is, throughout, a bantering tone. Not that it matters, but these two, in a different world, would like each other -- they're both, in their own ways, deeply moral men.

LUTHER

So, do you want my confession now  
or after coffee?

As Luther draws some coffee from an urn --

SETH

(doing the same)

Before I send you away for life, I  
should probably check out your  
alibi.

(CONTINUED)

61.

168 CONTINUED:

168

LUTHER

Watched the Bullets game with Red  
Bransford. Prison buddy of mine  
-- runs a bar -- want to question  
me about the game? I'm probably  
lying.

They each give the cashier some money and we see a quiet table in the corner as they head for it.

SETH

You been following the case?

LUTHER

(nods vigorously)

I love true crime --

SETH

-- F.B.I. feels only a few guys  
could have handled something as  
hard as the Sullivan job.

(touches his notebook)

I've got a list here; you're on  
it.

LUTHER

(nothing shows)  
I wish it was true.  
(shakes his head)  
Your robber actually went in the  
front door but came out down a  
rope in the dark in the middle of  
the night?  
(as Seth nods;  
Luther sighs)  
If only I could do stuff like that  
-- I'd be the star of my A.A.R.P.  
meetings.

Luther and Seth as they sit. Seth smiles, looks at  
Luther.

**SETH**

(beat)  
Luther? Why was this so hard?

Luther. Now he's surprised. He kind of smiles.

**LUTHER**

You want me to help solve your  
case?

(CONTINUED)

62.

168 CONTINUED: (2)

168

**SETH**

Just looking for insight. How  
would you -- scratch that -- how  
would one go about it? What kind  
of person do you think I should be  
looking for?

**LUTHER**

(like a shot)  
Older fella. Like me.

**SETH**

(now he smiles)  
Because?

**LUTHER**

Need patience. The secret is just  
research, research, research --  
from everything I've read.

Seth. This hasn't gone at all the way he thought -- and  
he's starting to get fascinated.

**SETH**

Research for what?

**LUTHER**

Well, from what I can tell on the tube, it's not a small house.

(as Seth nods)

There had to be an architect, right? You'd be able to tell which one from public records in the library. And once you know the office, you could break in and find the plans and Xerox them, get them back before morning.

**SETH**

Not just steal them?

**LUTHER**

Seth -- breaking in isn't hard -- what's hard is breaking in so no one knows you've been there. Now, after the architect, next you'd want the contractor's office -- and the security company's office.

(beat)

You know the skill involved breaking the security of a security company?

(shakes his head)

I wonder how those guys do it?

(CONTINUED)

63.

168 CONTINUED: (3)

168

**SETH**

Why go to all that trouble?

**LUTHER**

Papers said he kept the money in a vault, yes?

(as Seth nods)

Well, I'm guessing there was probably some secret way to open it --

**SETH**

(casually)

-- clicker --

**LUTHER**

(fascinated)

-- explain --

**SETH**

-- gizmo -- looked like a V.C.R.  
remote --

**LUTHER**

(shaking his head)  
-- amazing --  
(beat)  
-- must have been a lot of money  
inside.

**SETH**

(sipping casually;  
a pause)  
Five million.

And on those words --

Luther, more than he thought, a lot more -- but of course  
nothing shows -- instead he breaks out laughing.

**SETH**

Why's that funny?

**LUTHER**

The way you said it -- as if you  
were trying to surprise me.

**SETH**

(smiles)  
I was trying to surprise you.

**LUTHER**

(smiles back)  
There you go.

(CONTINUED)

64.

168 CONTINUED: (4)

168

Seth sips his coffee, takes out his notebook, opens it.

**SETH**

Would the burglar use a disguise?

**LUTHER**

Seth, you've got to get with the  
program you expect to catch this  
guy -- most likely it is a guy, am  
I right? Some kind of weird  
loner?

**SETH**

Maybe like you.

**LUTHER**

(couldn't agree more)  
I'm the perfect prototype.  
(sipping away)  
But you see any face often enough,  
you'll start putting things  
together. That's why these top  
guys disguise themselves. I read  
a great article a couple of years  
back -- damn, I wish I could  
remember where -- anyway, it was  
about these makeup experts some of  
them use -- wigmakers, people like  
that.

**SETH**

(flipping a page)  
Go on about the wigmakers.

**LUTHER**

(glancing at his watch)  
I'd love that but I'm late as it  
is -- got to get my pacemaker  
checked.  
(he likes Seth)  
-- all this excitement, you  
understand.

**SETH**

(and he likes Luther)  
A) You don't have a pacemaker, and  
B) I'll be back tomorrow.

**LUTHER**

Tomorrow is promised to no one.

HOLD ON Luther.

65.

169 INT. LUTHER'S SMALL HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

169

Luther is throwing clothes into a suitcase while talking  
on the phone --

**LUTHER**

Not 'til morning?  
(makes a face)  
-- I'll be by early --

He hangs up, shuts the suitcase, takes off out the  
door --

170 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

170

A place we've seen briefly before. Dark. Moonlight through the windows.

The sound of a KEY IN the DOOR.

Luther enters, takes out a tiny flashlight. We're in one largish room, books all over. The home of someone who doesn't care a whole lot about their home.

171 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 171

Luther enters. He opens the fridge. Disaster -- still water, sparkling water, carrot sticks.

LUTHER

(sadly, muttering)  
Katie darling, you've gotta try  
real food sometime.

He closes the door, moves back into the room --

172 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 172

A graduation photo of Kate. Luther touches it with a fingertip, moves on through the silence.

173 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 173

Luther by the bed now, he flashes his light around --

-- what the light illuminates: a bed table full of law books. Expected. A phone/answering machine. The mandatory lamp.

And photographs. A proud mother and daughter picture. The daughter is Kate. The mother is a fine-looking woman with a kind face.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 66.

173 CONTINUED: 173

Half a dozen more shots as Kate grew up, the mother grew older. Mother and daughter, mother and daughter. Nothing unusual here at all.

So why is Luther so sad?

HOLD.

174 EXT. MIDDLETON COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

174

10 A.M. A white-brick, weather-beaten building, Old Glory fighting the breeze.

**RICHMOND (V.O.)**

I am having this press conference here because...

Richmond, speaking on a podium. The press corps stands in front of him, TV crews of all kinds, CNN the most noticeable.

**RICHMOND**

... it is here, at this courthouse, that Christine Sullivan's killer will be tried for his crime.

\*

Burton and Collin, in the b.g., scanning the crowd. Gloria Russell stands behind them.

175 INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - DAY

175

The same shot -- only now it's grainy -- we're watching it on a TV SCREEN. CNN ON the TUBE.

A BARTENDER cleaning glasses; otherwise, not a whole lot going on.

Now Luther enters, dressed for travel. He goes to a stool, orders a ginger ale, puts his passport and ticket on the bar, glances toward the TV.

**LUTHER**

Turn that off, okay?

**BARTENDER**

(finishing up the glasses)

In a sec.

67.

176 EXT. MIDDLETON COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

176

Richmond at his press conference. He speaks without notes and he speaks beautifully.

**RICHMOND**

As you know, I came from an impoverished family in an impoverished town -- but we lived with our doors unlocked.

Russell watching, listening; she loves hearing him talk.

**RICHMOND (O.S.)**

We all lock our doors now, but  
that is not what concerns me...

Burton and Collin, scanning the crowd.

**RICHMOND (O.S.)**

... we are also locking our  
hearts... that is the sadness,  
that is the loss.

Richmond, and suddenly he's like a Southern minister.

**RICHMOND**

We are locking our hearts to the  
cries of the weary, we are locking  
our hearts to the poor and their  
pain...

An old man, standing behind Russell. We realize it's  
Walter Sullivan.

**RICHMOND (O.S.)**

... Sisters and brothers, we are  
locking our hearts to ourselves.

177 INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - DAY

177

Walter Sullivan. Grainy now. CNN. He has aged  
shockingly in the past couple of days.

Luther staring sympathetically at the devastated old man.

-- Sullivan's image suddenly is gone --

-- The Bartender has TURNED OFF the TELEVISION.

**LUTHER**

(politely)

Put it back on.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

68.

177 CONTINUED:

177

**BARTENDER**

(starting to argue)

You said --

**LUTHER**

(cutting through)

Do it --

CNN. Walter Sullivan is still there.

**RICHMOND (V.O.)**

We feel savagery and violence must  
be allowed a place at table.

(beat)

That is wrong. That is not  
America. I shall fight that  
battle.

Luther, staring at the image of Walter Sullivan, who is  
heartsick and beaten. Luther is simply transfixed --

-- Richmond on CNN and now he has turned and is beckoning  
for Walter Sullivan to join him.

Sullivan for a moment is uncertain. He points to himself  
-- "do you mean me?" Richmond nods, opens his arms out  
wide. Sullivan gets up, comes forward.

Luther, as he gets up too, also comes forward, leaving  
the stool, walking close to the television.

Richmond and Sullivan, grainy on CNN as Richmond embraces  
Sullivan, holds him in a loving embrace.

**RICHMOND (V.O.)**

Dear friend, old friend, we shall  
fight that battle.

Sullivan, too overcome by the moment, can only nod.

**RICHMOND (V.O.)**

Who can explain the ways of  
chance? If we had never met, I  
would not be President. If  
Christine had not taken ill, she  
would be with you in Barbados  
even now. Oh, Walter, you've  
always been like a father to me.  
I would give the world to lessen  
your pain.

\*  
\*  
\*

69.

178 EXT. MIDDLETON COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

178

The press corps. Subdued, saddened.

Richmond and Walter. They turn, face the cameras. The  
president's arm is still around the old man; they both  
blink back tears and now --

-- here it comes ! --

179 INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - EXTREME CLOSEUP - LUTHER - DAY 179

Tears of rage in his eyes. A rage so deep it shocks him --

LUTHER

You -- heartless -- prick --  
(building)  
-- you -- fucking -- bastard --

The Bartender, surprised, turning toward Luther. He starts to say something, stops; something tells him to shut up and he does.

180 EXT. MIDDLETON COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY 180

Richmond, wiping away tears, alone on camera.

181 INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - DAY 181

Luther, wiping away tears, in the bar.

A SHOT of the two of them, Luther and Richmond, one on CNN, one in reality, because Luther has moved so close to the TV he and Richmond could almost be staring at each other.

LUTHER

(whispered now)  
I'm not running -- not from you.  
(beat)  
I'm going to bring you down...

HOLD ON the two men.

182 INT. WHITE HOUSE - NORTH PORTICO - DAY 182

Seventy very excited people we've never seen before. They stare around at their surroundings -- they are in the White House. On a guided tour.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 70.

182 CONTINUED: 182

A bright late morning of what's going to be a beautiful day. A guide leads the people through a doorway. They troop happily along.

Luther is with them; he seems happy too.

183 INT. WHITE HOUSE - NORTH PORTICO AREA - DAY

183

The guide leads the people through. They look around, chat with their friends, follow the guide out.

Luther follows the guide out too.

HOLD ON the room.

All is as it was.

Except a large envelope has been dropped on a side table.

MOVE IN ON the envelope --

-- it's addressed to Gloria Russell.

184 INT. WHITE HOUSE - GLORIA RUSSELL'S OFFICE - DAY

184

Gloria Russell. Terrified.

Her doors are closed, Russell is at her desk. Burton stands alongside. Collin, silent, sits in a corner.

And on her desk, half out of the envelope, is a photograph of the letter opener.

**RUSSELL**

He was in the building -- he took a guided tour.

Burton pulls the picture all the way out, studies it.

**RUSSELL**

I've never dealt with blackmail --

**BURTON**

(trying for calm)  
-- he doesn't want money --

**RUSSELL**

(exploding)  
-- you a mind reader too?

\*

(CONTINUED)

71.

184 CONTINUED:

184

**BURTON**

(under control)

No, I just looked on the back --  
                  (shows her )  
-- see? --

Luther has written something.

**RUSSELL**  
(reading)  
'I don't want money.'

Russell is more upset.     Burton almost smiles.

**LUTHER**  
(admiringly)  
This guy sure has the guts of a  
burglar. Wish we had him.

Collin laughs.

**RUSSELL**  
You finished your recruiting  
speech? Because I'd like to know  
how I handle this.

**BURTON**  
Like you handled the letter  
opener?

Russell.     She studies Burton.     Then --

**RUSSELL**  
Gee, Bill, that could be construed  
as criticism. Do you really want  
me as an enemy?

Burton stands there, massively powerful. His voice, when  
he speaks, is his usual voice: polite, considerate.

**BURTON**  
Miss Russell, I should have called  
the police that night. But I was  
weak. You convinced me to stay  
silent. I regret that.  
                  (another pause)  
Know this: every time I see your  
face I want to rip your throat  
out.

Russell.     Silence.

(CONTINUED)

72.

**RUSSELL**

Fine -- you win the pissing  
contest --

(then suddenly  
almost like a  
little girl)

-- what should I do?

**BURTON**

Nothing -- because he's making a  
terrible mistake, he thinks he has  
time -- he doesn't -- Seth Frank's  
too good. He'll bring him in.

**RUSSELL**

Then what?

**COLLIN**

(his first words)

Then I kill him.

Now, from them --

185 INT. KATE'S OFFICE - DAY

185

She is, we will find, a top prosecutor for the Common-  
wealth of Virginia. Her office is a zoo.

On her desk, a baby picture of Kate and her mom smiling  
-- but there is something a little different about it.

Seth enters and they shake. He glances around --

-- sees the photograph, glances away.

Kate has risen now -- and in the silence it's clear that  
even though they are both standing still, they are both  
circling.

**SETH**

(trying for a smile)

For a tough prosecutor, you don't  
resemble your reputation, Miss  
Whitney.

**KATE**

(the same)

Is that good or bad?

**(MORE)**

**(CONTINUED)**

73.

185 CONTINUED:

185

**KATE (CONT'D)**

(before Seth can  
reply)

Look, Lieutenant -- I told you on  
the phone, I'm simply not involved  
with my father, so this may not be  
a waste of time for you, but it  
sure is for me.

**SETH**

What would you do if I just turned  
around and left?

**KATE**

Report you as an incompetent.

**SETH**

(a real smile now)  
You're exactly like your  
reputation, Miss Whitney --

As they head out --

**186 INT. LOUNGE OUTSIDE KATE'S OFFICE - DAY**

**186**

They enter. It's empty.

**SETH**

(the instant  
they're alone)

I'm assuming your father's a big  
part of you --

**KATE**

-- what? --

**SETH**

-- You think it's all coincidence?  
He's a thief and you just happen  
to be the toughest prosecutor in  
the area?

**KATE**

(just amazed)  
Wow -- that never crossed my mind  
-- you think there might be some  
connection? -- Like maybe I'm  
somehow compensating? -- I better  
write that down.

**SETH**

-- Luther disappeared.

**(CONTINUED)**

186 CONTINUED:

186

No reaction.

A banged-up couch. Kate sits, shrugs.

**SETH**

I think you can help me.

**KATE**

Lieutenant -- I don't know the man -- he was in jail when I was a kid, when he got out my mother and I went off to live by ourselves. We don't make contact. He doesn't care about me. I've seen him all of once this past year.

**SETH**

When?

**KATE**

Couple days ago. He said he might be going away. There. I just helped you. Can I go back to work now?

**SETH**

(shakes his head)

Any idea where he might have gone?

Seth and Kate realize something: In a different world, under different circumstances, they'd probably be starting an affair.

**KATE**

(snappishly)

Quit wasting my time -- if he doesn't want you to find him, you're not going to find him.

**SETH**

You saying he's left town, skipped the country, what?

**KATE**

I'm saying you won't recognize him. I'm saying he could be just around the corner -- he always kept a safe house --

**SETH**

(cutting in)

-- where? --

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

75.

186 CONTINUED: (2)

186

**KATE**

He never said --

**SETH**

-- Then where'd you hear this?

CLOSEUP - KATE

\*

**KATE**

-- my mother loved him, all right?  
-- Even after she left him -- even  
when she was dying she always  
talked about him -- 'If only he  
hadn't this,' 'if only he could  
have that' --

She stops.

Seth, watching her.

**SETH**

And?

**KATE**

I meet a lot of asshole cops like  
you -- guys who O.D.'d on  
Columbo --

**SETH**

-- Lady, I may be an asshole cop  
but you don't know me well enough  
to call me one --

**KATE**

-- There's something else, isn't  
there? Something you want me to  
do? -- But you won't say ---

Seth. There is. But he won't say.

Kate. For the first time now, apprehension. Now --

187 EXT. LUTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

187

The row of small, neat houses -- where Luther lived.

Kate and Seth get out of his car, go to the front door.

**KATE**

How long did he live here?

(CONTINUED)

76.

187 CONTINUED:

187

**SETH**

Years.

**KATE**

Never been.

188 EXT. LUTHER'S FRONT DOOR - DAY

188

Seth stoops, gets the key from under the terra cotta planter.

**SETH**

Strange place for a thief to leave a key, don't you think?

**KATE**

(quick memory)  
He always did that...

189 INT. LUTHER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

189

They enter. It's surprisingly tidy.

Seth and Kate as they move along. Seth is watching Kate who suddenly stops dead.

The mantle. A large blowup of the same picture Kate had in her office, the one of Kate and her mom --

-- with one startling change: Luther is in this shot, standing there proud and smiling. She has ripped his presence out of her photo.

Seth, silently watching Kate. She turns sharply away. He gestures for her to follow.

190 INT. LUTHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

190

They enter. Clothes tossed all over.

**SETH**

He sure took off in a hurry. What  
scares a professional thief like  
that?

Kate. No reply. She has seen something across the tiny  
room and is drawn to it --

Luther's bed table --

-- and here it is!

(CONTINUED)

77.

190 CONTINUED:

190

Call it a montage, call it a collage, call it what you  
will, we are looking at dozens of photographs --

-- all of them featuring Kate.

Many of them we saw in her apartment -- only here, as in  
the photo over the mantle, Luther is there with Kate and  
her mom.

We are looking at a shrine!

And there are newer photos too -- Kate at her college  
graduation, Kate at her law school graduation, Kate and  
her mother coming out of an elegant restaurant, Kate  
alone on the steps of Middleton County Courthouse --

-- these are not posed shots.

She looks wonderful and alive in all of them --

Kate. She looks dead now. All energy gone. She sits  
heavily down on the bed.

**KATE**

(fighting tears)

... but he wasn't at those  
places...

(pointing to the  
grown-up photos)

... college graduation; law school  
graduation; the night Mom and I  
celebrated when I got a job; and  
me alone on the steps? -- I'd just  
won my first case, I was so  
proud...

(still fighting)

... I used to think... sometimes  
I'd come home and I'd sense he'd  
been in my apartment, checking the

fridge, shaking his head because  
he never thought I ate right...  
It's crazy but I just knew Daddy  
was watching over me...

And now she loses it, starts crying silently.

Seth kneels alongside her, gives her a handkerchief.

**SETH**

You can do a good thing, Kate --  
(beat)  
-- help me bring him in. Just  
leave a message on his phone  
machine, you're worried about him.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

78.

190 CONTINUED: (2)

190

**KATE**

... No...

**SETH**

It's the truth -- you are worried  
about him -- this isn't your  
normal case -- his life may be in  
danger -- you can save him, make  
the call --

**KATE**

... He won't come...

**SETH**

(indicating the  
pictures)

Of course he'll come. You're all  
he has.

Kate, staring at the photos, trying to get control.

**SETH**

(moving in)

Kate, he's on the run and he's  
scared and he's right to be scared  
because he's going to get caught  
-- you don't know the heat on this.

\*

**KATE**

He's not a murderer.

\*

\*

**SETH**

Maybe you're right. Maybe he is  
innocent. If so I'll have him

\*

\*

\*

home and dry in a few hours. But  
what happens if some hotshot who's  
trying to make a reputation tracks  
him down?

(beat)

I can guarantee his safety. You  
make the call, I make a promise:  
You'll have your father, home and  
dry...

\*

191 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON 191

Kate alone. Totally wiped out. She is on the phone with  
Seth. Outside, the sun is dying.

KATE

I left a message on his machine,  
he called back within an hour;  
we're meeting tomorrow afternoon.

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 79.

192 INT. SETH'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON 192

Seth, taking it down.

SETH

Where?

KATE (V.O.)

An open-air place near my office,  
the Cafe Alonzo --

Seth's excited.

193 INT. TREASURY BUILDING - BURTON'S OFFICE - BURTON - 193 \*  
LATE AFTERNOON

taking it down.

KATE (V.O.)

Four o'clock -- it's deserted then.

Burton's excited too. HOLD.

194 EXT. SKY - MOON - NIGHT 194

high in the sky -- middle of the night now.

195 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - KATE - NIGHT 195

Wired. Pacing across her small apartment, back and

forth, back and forth.

**196 INT. SETH'S OFFICE - SETH - NIGHT 196**

alone in his office, going over plans, sipping coffee to stay awake.

**197 INT. BURTON'S BEDROOM - BURTON - NIGHT 197**

alone in his bed, staring at the ceiling, a nearly empty Scotch bottle in one hand.

**198 OMITTED 198**

**199 INT. LUTHER'S SAFE HOUSE APARTMENT - LUTHER - NIGHT 199**

listening to the PHONE MACHINE. We hear KATE'S VOICE.  
"Daddy... I miss you... I'm worried... call me..."

A CLICK. Luther hangs up, immediately dials again. We hear the message start over. "Daddy... I miss you..." As he continues to listen --

80.

**200 EXT. FIRING RANGE - DAY (EARLY MORNING) 200**

-- on what's going to be a gorgeous day.

Burton, yawning, blowing into a steaming paper cup of coffee. Collin, wide awake, moves alongside. Collin is carrying a rifle.

-- we are at a government firing range.

Collin squints into the morning sun.

Burton, putting down the coffee cup, picking up a pair of binoculars.

Burton and Collin staring out --

-- A distant target is being raised.

Collin. He strokes the barrel of his high-powered rifle.

CUT TO:

**201 TARGET 201**

A long way off.

CUT TO:

202 BURTON 202

as he has focused the binoculars --

203 BINOCULAR POV - TARGET 203

seen through the binoculars as it comes clear -- the  
bull's eye is small.

CUT TO:

204 COLLIN 204

with his rifle. His fingers still move along the barrel.  
No hurry whatsoever --

-- and then it all goes fast, and in one motion he is  
aiming and FIRING and FIRING again and the sound explodes  
and --

Burton, dazed.

CUT TO:

81.

205 TARGET 205

-- the bull's eye has been totally blown away.

CUT TO:

206 OMITTED 206

207 INT. DOWNTOWN MEN'S STORE - DAY 207

Luther and a SALESMAN are engaged in conversation.  
Luther is buttoning a new raincoat to the throat. The  
Salesman holds several hats. Luther picks one, tries it  
on.

LUTHER

I need to look really good today.

He doesn't like the hat.

SALESMAN

Business?

(as Luther tries  
the other hat --

very rakish, he  
likes it)  
It's a woman, I can tell.  
(as Luther nods)  
Never too late, is it?

Luther. Beaming.

**LUTHER**

You got that right.

Now, from his happy face --

**208 EXT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - THREE CURSING WORKMEN - DAY 208**

PULL BACK to reveal the workmen are on a scaffolding two stories up, struggling to replace a glass panel that has cracked.

The glass panel is heavy and bulky and the workmen are having a bitch of a time with it.

The entire front of the building is glass panels. It mirrors the area across the street -- a bunch of dilapidated brownstones.

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 82.

**209 EXT. BROWNSTONES ACROSS FROM CAFE ALONZO - DAY 209**

They are empty and, according to a sign, are due for demolition. All the windows of the brownstones are closed -- except one. On an upper story.

**210 INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY 210**

Inside the window. Michael McCarty, who we last met at Walter Sullivan's, is there. He looks out.

\*  
\*

**211 HIS POV 211**

The glass building and the struggling workmen and, on the ground floor, a few tables are set outside, with large umbrellas alongside each.

There is a sign: CAFE ALONZO.

**212 INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY 212**

McCarty. Beside him is a leather case. He opens it.

The case. A very high-powered rifle. McCarty begins to

expertly assemble it, taut and businesslike.

**213 INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS DEBRIEFING ROOM - DAY 213**

Seth, taut and businesslike, stands by a blown-up map of the Cafe Alonzo area. The restaurant is circled -- and around it are marked places for policemen to wait -- Seth is giving instructions to those policemen now --  
-- fifty of them. And no one's smiling.

**214 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY 214**

Kate. Dressed and ready. Lying on her bed. Afternoon now. She gets up, makes it halfway to the front door --  
-- can't do it -- she turns, goes back to bed, lies down again, frozen.

**215 EXT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - DAY 215**

The cursing workmen. The glass panel is so damn cumbersome they are having a miserable time.

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 83.

**216 EXT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY 216**

An elderly couple sits at one of the half dozen outdoor tables.  
The place is empty.

**217 EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT - DAY 217**

Seth, outside headquarters now, giving instructions to police officers. Behind them: two dozen unmarked cars.

**CUT TO:**

**218 SUN 218**

Later in the afternoon.

**219 EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT - DAY 219**

Burton, getting out of his car at Seth's Police Headquarters.

Seth, finishing instructing a dozen motorcycle cops.

\*

Burton moves up behind Seth, waits quietly. As Seth is done, he sees Burton, they nod, start toward Seth's car.

**BURTON**

The Boss is very grateful.  
Thanks.

**SETH**

Figured he'd like an eyewitness  
report of the capture. This is  
our guy -- if he's innocent, he  
sure took off awful fast.

220 **EXT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - DAY** 220

The three workmen. Making some headway with the bulky  
glass panel --

221 **GUNSCOPE POV** 221

-- now crosshairs cover them and we --

PULL BACK to reveal --

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 84.

222 **INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY** 222

McCarty, staring out the window of the brownstone, the  
rifle pointed -- very relaxed, he pulls the trigger --  
the RIFLE'S not loaded yet -- and the STACCATO "CLICK" is  
all we hear.

223 **INT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - LOBBY** 223

Seth and Burton moving quickly into the lobby of the  
glass office building that adjoins the Cafe Alonzo -- the  
lobby has a clear view of the outdoor part of the cafe.

Around and behind them, dozens of cops get in position.

224 **EXT. STREET - CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - DAY** 224

Around the corner from the glass building -- unmarked  
cars.

225 **EXT. ANOTHER STREET - NEAR THE CAFE BUILDING - DAY** 225 \*

Motorcycles, waiting in shadow, out of sight.

226 INT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY 226

Seth and Burton. They've both seen a lot -- which doesn't mean they're not tense. Burton takes out some Tums, offers them to Seth. Seth shakes his head, brings out Tums of his own.

CUT TO:

227 SUN 227

Starting down.

228 EXT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - DAY 228

The three workmen and they hate their job. One of them glances down.

229 EXT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY 229

Empty.

Now, from the workmens' angle, a woman moves to one of the tables. It's Kate. They don't pay much attention.

85.

230 EXT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY 230

Kate. She hesitates, then decides on the front table. She takes a breath. Sits. Motionless.

CUT TO:

231 GUNSCOPE POV - CLOSEUP ON KATE 231

-- now crosshairs cover her face and we --

PULL BACK to reveal --

232 INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY 232

McCarty as before, with his weapon. He pulls the trigger again and again, there is the "CLICK" -- now he flicks away a grain of dust from the barrel --

-- then he puts the weapon down, reaches out and --

ONE BULLET. It's supersonic ammo. McCarty picks it up, blows on it gently. He might be holding a child.

233 INT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY 233

Burton and Seth. They can see Kate sitting alone in the late afternoon.

SETH

(mutters)

Fuck...

-- And a goddamn WAITER has appeared and is walking out toward Kate. He is Asian and very young.

234 EXT. CAFE ALONZO 234

Kate, startled as the Waiter calls out from behind her.

WAITER

Miss?

(as she spins around)

What you want please?

His English could be a lot better.

KATE

Nothing, thank you.

(CONTINUED)

86.

234 CONTINUED: 234

WAITER

Got to.

KATE

Pardon?

WAITER

(gesturing)

You sit you eat please.

235 INT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY 235

Seth and Burton. Stunned.

SETH

This is not part of my brilliant master plan.

More Tums.

**BURTON**

Unfuckingbelievable.

They both crunch away.

**236 INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY**

**236**

McCarty, watching the Waiter and Kate. He's not happy either. He points a finger at the Waiter, goes "Boom."

**237 EXT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY**

**237**

Kate, and it's almost four o'clock and she's not at her best.

**KATE**

(gesturing around)  
I'm waiting for someone.

**WAITER**

He must eat too, please.

**KATE**

Oh he will, we both will -- we'll order half the menu -- but just not now --

The Waiter nods, finally he turns, starts off.

Kate. Trembling.

(CONTINUED)

87.

**237 CONTINUED:**

**237**

The Waiter returning.

**WAITER**

Cheesecake gone.

**KATE**

Thank you so much.

The Waiter nods again, and this time he does go.

Kate, watching him, making sure. Now she sits straight --

**238 CLOSEUP - KATE**

**238**

Very shaky, trying to hold it together. And now

crosshairs cover her face as we PULL BACK to reveal --

239 EXT./INT. UNMARKED VAN ON STREET NEAR CAFE BUILDING - DAY 239

Collin. He holds a very high-powered weapon. It looks like it could kill from a thousand yards away.

Where he is -- and it's not a thousand yards away -- he's in an unmarked van on the street, even closer than McCarty.

Collin, loading his weapon. His movements are skilled. His concentration is total.

240 INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY 240

McCarty, glancing out at the office building area. The three workmen on the scaffolding are fighting to right the glass panel. One of them grabs a rope connected to a block and tackle.

He pulls on the rope. Slowly, the piece begins to rise.

241 EXT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY 241

Kate, sitting alone, studying her hands.

242 INT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY 242

Seth and Burton. The waiting is agony.

88.

243 EXT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY 243

Kate. It's worse for her. She glances around --  
-- nothing, no one.

244 INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY 244

McCarty. All the time in the world.

245 INT. UNMARKED VAN - DAY 245

Collin. Blows on his weapon slightly.

246 EXT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY 246

Kate, and it's a question of how much longer she can take it. Her trembling is almost out of control -- she glances around again and --

-- and there he is!

Luther Whitney himself, and he looks splendid in his new raincoat and hat --

-- he moves along in the shadow of the office building, toward the cafe, walking with his usual grace -- Luther always seems to glide.

**247 INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY 247**

McCarty in the window. Spotting Luther --

-- totally controlled.

**248 INT. UNMARKED VAN - DAY 248**

Collin does the same.

**249 INT. LOBBY - DAY 249**

Seth and Burton, and the instant Luther is visible, Seth gestures toward the policemen: Get ready.

**250 INT. BROWNSTONE - McCARTY - DAY 250**

raising his rifle.

89.

**251 INT. UNMARKED VAN - DAY 251**

Collin, raising his.

**252 EXT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - DAY 252**

The three workmen, raising the glass panel.

**253 EXT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY 253**

Kate. Watching her father come closer.

Luther. It's hard to suppress a smile as he walks towards his daughter.





271 EXT. REAR OF BROWNSTONE - DAY 271

-- McCarty races out of the back of the building, leaps into a SPORTSCAR, GUNS away --

272 INT. UNMARKED VAN - DAY 272

-- Collin disassembles his rifle, scrambles from the van --

273 INT. LOBBY - DAY 273

-- Burton stays close to Seth, watching it all --

274 EXT. CAFE ALONZO BUILDING - DAY 274

-- The three workmen look down at it all -- then they look at each other in total confusion -- what the fuck is going on? --

-- because what they see is that the recently-deserted plaza is now stuffed with cops and more cops and vehicles and here come more and here come even more --

275 EXT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY 275

And Kate sits now, staring around, looking for Luther -- -- and Seth in the middle of it all stares around, looking for Luther --

-- because where the hell is he?

A black police lieutenant, shouting for his men to spread out.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 92.

275 CONTINUED: 275

Burton, turning, turning, trying to make sense of it all.

Three police sergeants on MOTORCYCLES, GUNNING through the crowd.

Kate, standing now, looking down -- and then she sees it -- on the ground where Luther was: a new raincoat and a new hat and --

Seth, and it's all gone wrong and it's all going crazy and there is noise and there are shouts and there are whistles.

The black police lieutenant, breaking into a run, chasing after someone we can't quite make out.

276 INT. CAFE ALONZO - DAY

276 \*

A tall uniformed police lieutenant, entering Cafe Alonzo --

-- he passes a couple of guys in chef's hats and the Chinese waiter who just gapes out toward what was his service area --

-- the tall uniformed police lieutenant moves gracefully past --

-- it's Luther.

He goes to the front door of the place, glances back toward where the NOISE is still mounting -- shakes his head -- out the door and gone!

277 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

277

The door to Kate's apartment opening and Seth coming in with Kate. Evening. Kate is as drained as you'd expect.

KATE

(glancing around)

Messy.

SETH

I like that in a woman.

She doesn't smile.

Seth, giving her back her keys and a piece of paper. His voice is raw from all the shouting.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

93.

277 CONTINUED:

277

SETH

Top number's local police --

(as she nods)

-- other two are my office and home.

(off another nod)

I live alone, too, call anytime.  
Want me to get someone to spend  
the night?

**KATE**

I just need some sleep.

**SETH**

I've got surveillance outside.  
And I'm keeping it on 'til this is  
over. I've got a feeling he's  
going to try and contact you.

**KATE**

You're on a hot streak, I guess.

**SETH**

Listen, I'm sorry.

Kate. Nothing to say.

**SETH**

Anything unusual, call me right  
away -- not a bother, I live  
alone.

**KATE**

You said.

**SETH**

(he knows that)  
Feeble, huh?

\* She nods. They look at each other. Then he starts toward  
the door. Slowly.

**KATE**

Anything for the road? I've got  
water and water.

**SETH**

Deal.

278 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

278

They enter and she opens the fridge --

(CONTINUED)

94.

278 CONTINUED:

278

-- and it's full of food: milk and fruit and cookies.

Kate stares, then quickly glances at Seth. He just points to a bottle.

**SETH**

Pelligrino would be great.  
(off Kate, who can't  
help it, breaks out  
laughing)  
What's funny, I say it wrong?

**KATE**

Tired is all.

As she hands him a bottle.

**279 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT**

**279**

as they move toward it. He opens it.

**SETH**

I don't think I've told you this,  
but I live alone.  
(and this time, as she  
does smile, and he  
does go)  
Lock it behind me.

**KATE**

(LOCKING it loudly)  
How's that?

**SETH (O.S.)**

Real good. Try and sleep.

His FOOTSTEPS get softer, DISAPPEAR.

**KATE**

(still facing door,  
her back to her  
apartment)  
I betrayed you, Luther. You  
better know that now.

**LUTHER (O.S.)**

You're not the first.

As Kate turns, Luther, standing there, is looking at her.

**KATE**

Why'd you come?

(CONTINUED)

**LUTHER**

You have to know I'm not a murderer.

**KATE**

No, this afternoon. To the restaurant. Why'd you come then? You must have suspected something, or you wouldn't have been prepared.

**LUTHER**

(simply)

My daughter wanted to see me.

He points to the couch -- as Kate sits. Luther, and before she's even seated, he's into it.

**LUTHER**

The robbery went fine 'til they came in. They were drunk. I hid in the vault. Sex got rough. He was going to kill Christy, but she turned the tables, was going to kill him. Two guys came in, shot her dead.

**KATE**

The same two guys who tried for you this afternoon?

**LUTHER**

Probably only one of them. I think Walter Sullivan might have hired the other.

**KATE**

Pretty powerful enemy; good going.

**LUTHER**

Not as powerful as the President of the United States.

Kate just looks at him.

Dead silence.

**LUTHER**

Richmond was drunk. The two guys are Secret Service. Chief of Staff Russell planned the coverup.

Kate just looks at him.

Dead silence.

Luther. Studying her. Not a great reaction.

Kate. Little shake of the head.

**LUTHER**

Every word true.

**KATE**

You're saying you're innocent of  
the murder? Why in the world

\*

should I believe you?

**CLOSEUP - LUTHER**

\*

Long pause.

**LUTHER**

Because I swear on Mattie's grave.

**KATE**

\*

Rocked --

Luther, going to her.

**LUTHER**

On your mother's grave, Kate --  
you know I'd kill myself before  
I'd lie about that.

Kate. Looking at him. Because he wouldn't lie, not  
about that.

Everything he's told her, all true.

The air goes out of her.

Silence.

**KATE**

(soft)  
Jesus, Luther.

**LUTHER**

I know.

**KATE**

They'll kill you.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

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279 CONTINUED: (3)

279

**LUTHER**

I know.

**KATE**

Can you run?

Luther as he sits beside her on the couch.

**LUTHER**

I was set to. At the airport.  
All the money I'd ever need.

**CLOSEUP - LUTHER**

\*

**LUTHER**

But I saw that bastard using  
Sullivan on the T.V. -- maybe I  
couldn't have saved that woman,  
Kate. But I didn't even try.

(beat)

I know what you think of me and I  
know what we've been to each  
other --

(beat)

-- haven't been to each other.  
And it's not the time to try and  
explain my life --

\*

**KATE**

\*

watching his face now.

**LUTHER**

-- but I've never robbed anyone  
couldn't afford it and I've never  
stuffed a waitress.

(beat)

And Alan Richmond has to pay.

**KATE**

What can you do?

**LUTHER**

Not much, maybe -- but I only went to jail when I had partners.

(beat)

People betray each other, Kate -- nowadays, when there's a group, someone wants to write a book --

**(MORE)**

**(CONTINUED)**

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

98.

**279 CONTINUED: (4)**

**279**

**LUTHER (CONT'D)**

(beat)

-- these people hate each other. And if I can drive them just a little bit nuts, who knows how they'll react under pressure?

(rises and looks at her)

Glad for the talk, wish we'd had more.

Luther crosses to the door, turns.

**LUTHER**

This is probably it; you understand that.

(as she does, he still looks at her. Then -- )

I was never going to tell you this, but I watched you argue a case last year -- thank God you got your brains from your mother.

Kate standing now, too -- they're across the room from each other.

**KATE**

It's dangerous outside.

**LUTHER**

It always is --

(beat)

-- and I may not make you proud, Kate --

(soft)

-- but I'm not going down alone...

And on that...

**280 EXT. RUSSELL APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

**280**

An elegant high-rise in Washington. Crisp, cool afternoon. A DOORMAN stands outside, enjoying the day.

A well-dressed man rounds the corner; he holds a small, beautifully-wrapped package with a small envelope attached. He moves to the Doorman.

(CONTINUED)

99.

280 CONTINUED:

280

**WELL-DRESSED MAN**

(it's Luther)

For Miss Gloria Russell.

He hands it over.

**DOORMAN**

(taking it)

Want me to sign anything?

**LUTHER**

(shakes head)

I trust you.

And he turns, walks quickly away as we --

281 INT. RUSSELL'S APARTMENT - DAY

281

The envelope being opened. It's early evening now. The message inside is short and clear --

The

"Gloria,

Thanks for the rescue.

AR"

Russell smiles, and as she opens the package --

282 INT. WHITE HOUSE - EAST ROOM - NIGHT

282

A beautiful necklace. Antique mostly likely. And tasteful -- we hear the sound of an ORCHESTRA PLAYING WALTZES.

PULL BACK to reveal Gloria Russell, looking just splendid, the necklace around her throat, entering a large and very impressive White House dinner-dance. Clearly an important affair of state.

We've never seen Russell quite secure in her femininity. She

like this -- relaxed, nods distantly to Burton

and Collin who are, as always, close the President. For  
the first time now, we realize something: Gloria Russell  
is hot for Alan Richmond.

Richmond, on the edge of the dance floor, chatting with  
some elderly couples, several of them European, all of  
them wealthy.

**RICHMOND**

(as Russell approaches)  
You're a vision this evening, Miss  
Russell.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

100.

282 CONTINUED:

282

**RUSSELL**

Thank you, Mr. President.  
(beat)  
And thank you, Mr. President.

**RICHMOND**

(doesn't understand)  
For?  
(off her, radiant,  
indicating the  
necklace)  
Come again?

This time she touches it -- he bends close to her.

**RUSSELL**

(whispering)  
You sent it to me this afternoon.

Long pause -- then...

**CLOSEUP - RICHMOND**

\*

So happy.

**RICHMOND**

Well, of course.  
(now, to the others)  
Excuse me, all -- I am overcome  
with the desire to dance with my  
Chief of Staff.

\*

A hand to her -- Russell, beaming, moves out onto the  
dance floor with him.

Everyone at the gathering, watching them.

Richmond and Russell, very much aware that all eyes are on them --

-- what we don't know is this: they are both wonderful dancers. And they seem to be reveling in their moves --

-- because throughout this, they never stop smiling.

**RICHMOND**

What is this nonsense? I'm hoping there's an explanation.

(CONTINUED)

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101.

282 CONTINUED: (2)

282

**RUSSELL**

(surprised)

Your gift, Alan -- I was overwhelmed -- and your note was so gratifying --

**RICHMOND**

(cutting in)

-- I sent a note?

**RUSSELL**

Yes, yes, you think I don't know your writing? I assumed you wanted me to wear it tonight.

The necklace. He looks at it as they spin gracefully.

**RICHMOND**

It is lovely, Gloria -- and you know what else?

They do a perfect dip.

**RUSSELL**

What, Alan?

**RICHMOND**

Christy Sullivan wore it the night

\*

she was killed.

\*

Russell, a quick glint of panic, a gentle peal of feminine laughter.

Richmond and Russell -- he bends her back, their mouths are close.

**RICHMOND**

You realize what this means?  
Whitney's been heard from.

**CLOSEUP - RUSSELL**

\*

They spin and glide. Long pause. Then --

**RUSSELL**

It's not precisely the first time,  
Mr. President.

\*

The MUSIC is BUILDING TO CLIMAX now. Their movements become more grand.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

102.

282 CONTINUED: (3)

282 \*

**RICHMOND**

(so happy)  
You've been keeping things from me?

**RUSSELL**

Only because you have so much on your plate, Alan; we wanted to spare you.

(beat)

He sent me a Polaroid of the letter opener yesterday.

**CLOSEUP - RICHMOND**

\*

A kick in the teeth --

-- he summons all his control, goes into even more complicated movements.

\*

The crowd of elegant men and women, it's really wonderful dancing they're seeing -- they start to applaud.

Richmond and Russell, hearing the sound. Richmond acknowledges it with a smile as they come to climax.

**RICHMOND**

Well, now --

(a final flourish)  
-- I need time to think -- come  
see me in my office in the  
morning --  
(beat)  
This will certainly make for an  
interesting chapter in my memoirs.

And as they bow...

The crowd applauding louder, while on the dance floor,  
the President of the United States and the Chief of Staff  
applaud happily back. As the sound builds --

**283 EXT. BURTON'S HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT 283**

Luther in the night. Silence.

He is moving across the rooftop of a home. He carries a  
briefcase -- Luther's making business calls.

Ahead is an attic window -- as he slides it open --

**103.**

**284 INT. BURTON'S HOUSE - ATTIC - NIGHT 284**

Luther, slipping inside. Some stairs are just across.  
He goes down them, opens the door --

**285 INT. BURTON'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT 285**

Luther stepping into the main part of the dark house. He  
stops. No noise at all except that of someone BREATHING  
DEEPLY, coming from an open bedroom door.

Luther passes by -- for an instant we can see that Burton  
is asleep, an empty bottle by his head.

**286 INT. COLLIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 286**

Luther rounding a corner --

-- and we can tell immediately he's in a different house  
now. Burton's had only old furnishings, these are modern  
and new.

Luther pauses, listening. Nothing.

He moves forward then, turns another corner --

**287 INT. RUSSELL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 287**

-- and now we can tell he's someplace else -- this is an apartment with a large window looking out on the city.

Luther doesn't stop to admire the view. He moves silently on...

HOLD ON the window.

And suddenly: Dawn -- the sun is starting to rise.

PULL BACK to reveal --

**288 INT. RUSSELL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN**

**288**

Gloria Russell, as the ALARM GOES OFF. She sits --

-- she stretches --

-- then she stares -- something has been taped to her lamp. We are looking at an issue of the Washington Post -- Russell's photo smiles out -- there is a headline that says simply: RUSSELL TO BE CHIEF OF STAFF.

Written across her picture are the words: "This shitstorm is your fault -- if we go down, you go down!" Russell takes the paper down, stares at it. Furious.

**104.**

**289 INT. BURTON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

**289**

Burton, hung over, staggering into the kitchen of his home, stopping dead. A newspaper is set beside his coffee pot.

A front page of the Washington Post. Years back. The lead article reports that a siege has been successfully broken --

-- Burton, bloody and wounded, is being carried to an ambulance. A hero. Across the top these words have been written:

**HOW DID THIS HAPPEN, YOU GUTLESS FUCK?**

Burton stares. Steaming.

**290 INT. COLLIN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING**

**290**

Collin, yawning, going into his bathroom --

-- across his mirror is taped a large white piece of paper, across which is written in thick black marker --

"If you could shoot for shit, we'd be out of this."

Collin angrily rips it down.

**291 EXT. DOWNTOWN NEWSSTAND - MORNING**

**291**

A bunch of commuters and businessmen are buying papers.

The newspapers. Washington, New York, Philadelphia -- and they're all different front pages, of course, but one photo in all of them is the same --

-- every one of them is running the mug shot of Luther. And the sense of the stories is the same too:

**HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN?**

**CUT TO:**

**292 COMMUTERS**

**292**

crowded around, making their purchases. Some of them are young, some of them are half asleep. One of them is in his 60's and very wide awake --

-- it's Luther --

-- as he buys a paper, looks at the headline -- fascinated.

**105.**

**292A INT. BURTON'S OFFICE**

**292A**

Still early morning -- Collin is going through Burton's desk hurriedly --

-- when Burton surprises him --

**BURTON**

(pissed)

What are you doing?

**COLLIN**

(closes the desk,  
shrugs)

Needed a pen.

**BURTON**

(pointing to his  
desktop)

There's pens --

(moving in)

-- you don't trust me? --

**COLLIN**

(pissed)

-- I don't answer to you, asshole  
--

Russell in the doorway now, glaring at them.

**RUSSELL**

You're both assholes, now move --

And on that --

**293 INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY**

**293**

The note that was sent to Russell and the Polaroid of the letter opener.

PULL BACK to reveal --

The Polaroid and the note are on Richmond's desk. He studies them. Russell, Burton and Collin stand silently watching him, their hatred of each other clear.

The smell of death's in the room.

**RICHMOND**

(holding the note now,  
his voice is, when he  
speaks, calm; to Burton)  
Any idea who could have forged it?

**(CONTINUED)**

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

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**293 CONTINUED:**

**293**

**BURTON**

I talked to Seth Frank --  
apparently Whitney learned how in  
prison.

**RICHMOND**

Very gifted man.

The window as he walks to it, looks out.

**RICHMOND**

And are we close to stopping him?

**RUSSELL**

We're working round the clock.

**RICHMOND**

Good to know that.

**BURTON**

He'll make a mistake.

**RICHMOND**

Good to know that too.

**CLOSEUP - RICHMOND**

\*

With more meaning than the words convey --

**RICHMOND**

There is one other thing you'll  
want to take care of.

The other three, looking at Richmond.

**BURTON**

You're sure you want to do that?

**RICHMOND**

(nods)

She's a young prosecutor,  
prosecutors ask questions -- she  
might know what he knows...

(a reassuring smile)

Let's get cracking, shall we?

(beat)

Show you love your country.

On those words --

107.

**294 INT. KATE'S APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY 294**

Kate Whitney, getting into the elevator. Off to work.  
She pushes for the lobby.

The doors close and the elevator starts down.

**295 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY 295**

Kate checks her purse to see if she has everything.

**296 INSERT - ELEVATOR BUTTON 296**

The "L" is lit --

-- but when the elevator gets there, it does not stop but  
goes straight on down to the basement.

297 INT. ELEVATOR - KATE - DAY 297

That's strange. She instinctively moves to the rear of the car.

ODD SOUNDS from the basement. Kate's just the least bit tense.

298 INT. ELEVATOR IN BASEMENT - DAY 298

The ODD SOUNDS are LOUDER.

And the doors don't open when they should.

299 INT. ELEVATOR - KATE - DAY 299

and now she's starting to get a little scared.

300 INT. BASEMENT - ELEVATOR DOORS - DAY 300

The doors sliding open and the Super standing there with tools.

SUPER

(smiling)

Sorry, Miss Whitney, but this thing's giving us a little trouble.

Kate nods, smiles back, relieved.

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 108.

301 EXT. KATE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY 301

Kate, leaving her building, going toward her car, getting in.

Down the block is a police car. Two surveillance cops inside. Kate starts to drive -- and so do they.

Kate turns a corner --

-- and so do they --

-- and as they do, they pass Luther, parked on the corner. Watching. Satisfied, he drives off in another direction.

302 EXT. OUTER CITY ROAD (WASHINGTON) - DAY 302

Luther, heading out of the city. The sun is higher in the sky.

**303 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 303**

Several cars. Traffic is moving slowly. Luther continues to drive.

**304 EXT. KATE'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY 304**

Kate, coming out of her office building, hurrying along the sidewalk. Lunch hour.

She goes past some brownstones -- the two cops walk behind --

-- the window of one of the brownstones is open, shadowy movement from inside --

-- Kate hurries past, not paying attention... Cops don't either.

\*  
\*

**305 EXT. BROWNSTONE - DAY 305**

Now a figure begins to appear in the window --

The figure holds something long and thin, like a rifle barrel --

-- it's a large woman with a long mop -- as she shakes it --

Afternoon and the sun is strong.

109.

**306 EXT. SULLIVAN MASTER BEDROOM - DAY 306**

Sunlight, streaming in an open bedroom window. Whose bedroom, though?

Two maids are cleaning it --

-- and now we realize where we are: Walter Sullivan's bedroom, but it's all been changed, different rug, different fabrics, different furnishings.

The maids work silently and well. A final sweep of a dust rag here, a last tug at the bedspread there.

Done. They go to the door, take a last look around.

Perfect.

They go.

HOLD ON the empty room.

Keep HOLDING.

Now, silently, the vault door opens -- a gardener steps out, clicker in hand.

The gardener -- it's Luther -- he clicks it, tosses it back inside --

-- the door starts to close --

-- but before it shuts, we can see he's returned what he took the night of the robbery.

And as he moves silently toward the door.

**307 EXT. GAS STATION (WASHINGTON CITY LIMITS) - DAY 307**

The outskirts of Washington. Mid-afternoon now.

Luther's at a pay phone.

**308 INT. SETH'S OFFICE - DAY 308**

Seth, as he picks up the phone --

**LUTHER (V.O.)**

Kate okay?

**SETH**

Where are you?

110.

**309 EXT. PAY PHONE - DAY 309**

Luther. Fast.

**LUTHER**

I'm not staying on long enough for you to track this, just answer me.

**310 INT. SETH'S OFFICE - DAY 310**

**SETH**

She couldn't be in better hands -- talk about catching a break, Secret Service called me. They're taking over surveillance --

311	<b>EXT. PAY PHONE - DAY</b>	311
	The telephone swinging back and forth -- -- and in the b.g., a car MOTOR ROARING away.	
312	<b>INT. KATE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ELEVATOR - DAY</b>	312
	Kate, coming down the elevator again -- in her jogging clothes now. She has pushed the lobby button.  The elevator stops suddenly on the second floor -- -- The Super gets in, smiles.	
	<b>SUPER</b> Got it working fine, Miss Whitney.	
	Kate nods, smiles back --	
312A	<b>EXT. WASHINGTON STREET - DAY</b>	312A
	Luther, driving like crazy through the city.	
312B	<b>EXT. KATE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY</b>	312B
	Kate, getting into her car in front of her building, driving off -- no one is behind her.	
312C	<b>EXT. WASHINGTON - ANOTHER STREET - DAY</b>	312C
	Luther, HONKING his HORN as he barrels around a corner, scattering traffic.	
)B(	ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96	111.
312D	<b>EXT. JOGGING PARK ENTRANCE - DAY</b>	312D *
	Kate drives into the park past a sign reading: "PARKING LOT."	* *
312E	<b>EXT. ROAD NEAR JOGGING PARK - DAY</b>	312E
	Luther, gunning along -- up ahead the park is visible now.	
312F	<b>EXT. JOGGING PARK - PARKING LOT - ENTRANCE ROAD - DAY</b>	312F

Kate, following an arrow that leads to the parking lot.

Luther, in the park, now, suddenly shouting "Shit" as we --

**312G EXT. JOGGING PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY 312G**

A "DETOUR" sign.

Kate, entering the parking lot.

**312H EXT. JOGGING PARK - PARKING LOT AREA - DAY 312H**

Luther, out of his car now, running like crazy through the park. Ahead is a sign saying: "JOGGING PATH."

**313 EXT. JOGGING PARK - PARKING AREA - DAY 313**

Not many other cars so she gets a space in front, overlooking the river, and as she stops, takes out her keys --

**314 BURTON AND COLLIN 314**

Collin at the wheel, ROARING in behind her, rear-ending her hard.

-- there is a SCREECH of BRAKES and a SCREAM --

**314A EXT. JOGGING PARK - TRAIL - DAY 314A**

Luther as he hears the terrible sound, keeps running.

**315 EXT. PARKING LOT - INT. KATE'S CAR - DAY 315**

Kate in her car as it teeters at the edge and then starts its long fall to the jogging path far below.

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 112.

**316 EXT. JOGGING PARK - PARKING AREA - DAY 316**

Burton and Collin in their car, driving like hell away.

**316A EXT. JOGGING PARK - TRAIL - DAY 316A**

Luther, running INTO VIEW, stopping dead, helpless now, staring at the worst thing in the world --

317 OMITTED 317

318 EXT. JOGGING PARK CLIFF - DAY 318 \*

Kate's car, careening against a rocky ledge, then cart wheeling the rest of the way down, landing horribly, spinning, finally coming to rest upside down and --

CUT TO:

319 EXT. BOTTOM OF CLIFF - DAY 319 \*

Luther running to the car; hands shaking, he manages to pull front door open and reach inside --

-- now there are cries as other joggers stop and stare and --

Kate, as Luther pulls her body out of the wreckage.

LUTHER

(terrified)

... Kate...?

-- no response -- it's impossible to tell if she's alive --

-- in the distance now, the sound of an AMBULANCE.

320 EXT. WASHINGTON HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - EVENING 320

The AMBULANCE, SIREN SCREAMING.

PULL BACK to reveal --

Early evening now, getting dark, and the ambulance braking in front of the emergency room of a large city hospital --

-- as doctors and attendants with gurneys come pouring out --

113.

321 INT. WASHINGTON HOSPITAL - KATE'S ROOM - NIGHT 321

A private room. Later. Kate is bandaged and attached to a bunch of equipment --

-- but however faintly her breathing, it's still breathing and it's steady. She's alone for the moment in the semi-darkened room.

322 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT 322

Empty. A doctor comes walking along -- it's Collin.

323 INT. HOSPITAL - KATE'S ROOM - NIGHT 323

Kate in her room, sleeping. Another doctor is with her now, checking her charts.

324 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT 324

Collin. He sees what's going on, stops, pulls out a small notebook, pretends to read it, all the while glancing toward Kate's room with the one doctor still there --

-- now from around the corner, NOISE, COMING CLOSER -- SEVERAL PEOPLE APPROACHING, perhaps more.

Collin turns away from the sound, curses, then stops --

-- The doctor is done with Kate's charts.

From around the corner now, the group coming closer still.

Kate's doorway as the doctor exits and Collin enters -- they pass each other --

325 INT. HOSPITAL - KATE'S ROOM - NIGHT 325

-- Collin moves a step further into the room --

-- and now there is something in his hand --

-- a hypodermic needle.

Kate. Out of it. Lying there, eyes closed.

Collin, the needle ready, moving silently toward the bed.

Kate is barely breathing.

(CONTINUED)

114.

325 CONTINUED: 325

And now suddenly Collin is barely breathing --

-- because the other doctor's arms have viced around Collin's neck, forcing the air out of him.

Collin, stunned, trying to struggle --

The doctor jerking Collin's body into the air -- his feet are dangling now -- the hypodermic needle drops to the bed as the struggle goes on --

-- and Collin's in fabulous shape. He's young and powerful and he's been in terrible situations before and he knows how to fight and he's been taught to defend himself and --

-- tough shit --

-- the doctor -- it's Luther -- relentlessly increases the pressure against Collin's throat --

-- Collin can't even gasp now --

-- his feet can't kick anymore --

-- his body starts to go limp --

-- his eyes start to slide up into his head --

-- silence in the room --

-- it's almost over --

-- which is when suddenly Luther lets go.

Collin, eyes flickering open as Luther lays him down on the floor. All this next is whispered.

**LUTHER**

Scream. Go on. Which do you want most, for me to kill you or life in jail forever?

He has gone across the room to the bed. Collin tries to move, can't.

The hypodermic needle as Luther picks it up carefully, starts back to Collin.

**LUTHER**

Going to guess this wasn't to pep her up.

**(CONTINUED)**

**COLLIN**

(staring, eyes wide)  
... you're not going to kill me...

**LUTHER**

... why do you think that...?

**COLLIN**

... you could have but you  
didn't...

Luther. Kneeling by Collin now.

**LUTHER**

That's because you didn't know  
your crime, prick.

-- and now he jams the needle against Collin's neck. \*

Collin tries to cry out, but Luther covers his mouth.

**LUTHER**

(kneeling close, almost  
whispering into Collin's  
ear)

I didn't mind you tried to shoot  
me at the restaurant -- I wouldn't  
have minded if you'd nailed me at  
Sullivan's -- part of the job --  
(beat)  
-- but you fucked with blood.

Collin. Terrified. \*

**COLLIN**

... mercy...

Luther, bending over him. Luther pushes the plunger. \*

**LUTHER**

I'm fresh out.

Collin dying now. His breathing is getting strange, his  
body starting to stiffen. And on that -- \*

**KATE (O.S.)**

... Daddy...?

Kate, eyes barely open. From her position Luther is  
simply kneeling, nothing else is visible...

**LUTHER**

... go to sleep, honey...

**(CONTINUED)**

325 CONTINUED: (3) 325

She tries to stay awake, can't make it, drifts off.

Kate. She closes her eyes.

Collin. Luther closes his eyes for him. Now --

326 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT 326

A gurney with a figure on it being pushed by a doctor.

327 EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 327

A dumpster outside --

-- the gurney is there --

-- the figure isn't --

-- the sound of a CAR GUNNING into the night and we --

328 INT. SETH'S BATHROOM - NIGHT 328

Seth coming out of the shower. He puts a towel around him, wipes the steam off the mirror, cries out --

-- Luther is standing there.

**LUTHER**

I need one answer -- when you interviewed Walter Sullivan, did he say why Christy didn't go to Barbados?

**SETH**

(shakes his head)  
Just that she changed her mind.  
(studying Luther)  
You know who did it, don't you?

**LUTHER**

So will you -- check your phones --

**SETH**

(incredulous)  
-- who'd tap a police officer?

No reply -- Luther's already headed for the door as we --

329 EXT. GEORGETOWN MANSION - NIGHT 329

Walter Sullivan, getting into his limousine in front of a Georgetown mansion. Later in the evening. The car starts to move. Walter looks frail and very old now. And somehow smaller.

330 EXT. GEORGETOWN/INT. LIMO - NIGHT 330

Walter huddled in the back seat, as the street lights illuminate him. He might even be ill. In any case, a sad figure.

331 EXT. GEORGETOWN - NIGHT 331

The limousine, turning a corner.

332 INT. LIMO - NIGHT 332

Walter. Blinking.

WALTER SULLIVAN

Is this a shortcut, Tommy? \*

CHAUFFEUR

(turns; it's Luther)

I'm your replacement driver for the evening, sir. Don't worry, Tommy's fine. \*

WALTER SULLIVAN

Very unusual -- what do I call you?

LUTHER

Luther, sir.

WALTER SULLIVAN

And are you familiar with how to get to my home, Luther?

LUTHER

I know the way, sir -- I'm the man who robbed you --

Sullivan says nothing; stares unsmiling.

LUTHER

-- and you're the man who tried to have me killed --

(CONTINUED)

118.

332 CONTINUED:

332

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

-- I'm sorry I missed -- I believe in the Old Testament, sir -- there is nothing wrong with an eye for an eye when a terrible deed has been done.

(ice)

A deed such as yours.

**LUTHER**

You want to believe that, don't you? -- Makes your life a lot simpler if you believe that, isn't that right?

(big now)

What do you think I gain being here?

Sullivan. Contempt.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

Have no idea -- you going to rob me again? --

**LUTHER**

I don't need your money, Mr. Sullivan. Look in your vault lately?

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(he has)

I'm afraid we're a little late for an attempt at leniency.

333 EXT. GEORGETOWN - STREET - NIGHT

333

The CAR. A SCREAMING TURN.

334 INT. LIMO - NIGHT

334

**LUTHER**

Shit's coming down tonight, Mr. Sullivan, do you want to be a player or not?

(bigger)

Do you want to know what happened, or not? I saw. Your call.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(beat)  
I want to know.

(CONTINUED)

119.

334 CONTINUED:

334

**LUTHER**

Are you up to hearing about it? --  
Do you want to hear how he beat  
the shit out of her and tried to  
strangle her -- you have enough  
left for that? --

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(a nod)  
-- I could walk through fire --

Luther, fast now.

**LUTHER**

I was in the chair when they came  
in.

(as Sullivan says  
nothing)

They were drunk -- at first he  
only wanted to bruise her -- she  
fought back, he went for the kill  
-- she turned the tables. Then he  
screamed for help.

Pause.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

Who else was in my house?

**LUTHER**

Secret Service shot her.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(doesn't like it)  
Nonsense.

**LUTHER**

Gloria Russell handled the cover  
up.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

Stop this --

**LUTHER**

-- don't you want to know who the

man was?

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(desperate)

It was you.

**LUTHER**

We're too old to bullshit each other, Mr. Sullivan.

**(CONTINUED)**

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

120.

**334 CONTINUED: (2)**

**334**

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(big)

Who was it then?

**LUTHER**

(bigger)

You know!

Sullivan, shaking his head as Luther roars on.

**LUTHER**

You fucking well do, don't shake your head at me -- when you're alone at night, when the rage takes you and you think of what you'd do to revenge her, on those nights you put a face to your enemy.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(coming apart)

Stop the car --

**LUTHER**

-- we're going all the way, Walter --

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

-- it's too terrible.

**LUTHER**

It sure is.

Walter Sullivan. A long, shaky moment, then --

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

... I know about Alan's reputation as a philanderer... but... he would never dream of betraying me... I gave him the Presidency.

Luther and Walter as Luther turns a sharp corner and the  
**WHEELS SCREAM --**

**LUTHER**

(pressing it)

The press conference -- remember?  
-- he held you in his arms and  
said if only Christy hadn't gotten  
sick she would have been with you  
in Barbados --

\*  
\*

**(MORE)**

**(CONTINUED)**

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

121.

**334 CONTINUED: (3)**

**334**

**LUTHER (CONT'D)**

(bigger)

-- how do you think he knew she  
was sick? You didn't tell  
anybody. But he heard it, all  
right. He heard it from her.  
That night. And I heard every  
word --

Walter. For a moment, no reaction. Then he sits back  
hard. The air's out of him. He just breathes quietly.  
Then --

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

That's not real proof.

Luther. Handing something back.

**LUTHER**

And this?

Sullivan takes it --

-- it's the letter opener.

Sullivan leans back, shuts his eyes.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

You could have stolen this.

**LUTHER**

I did steal it. But that isn't my  
blood and those aren't my prints.

**CLOSEUP ON SULLIVAN**

\*

Eyes still shut --

-- and he's very old and you expect tears --

-- but he didn't get to be Walter Sullivan by crying --

-- HOLD ON Walter --

-- and this incredible shriek of rage explodes! --

Luther, suddenly stopping the car --

**335 EXT. WHITE HOUSE GATE - NIGHT**

**335**

-- and we're at the rear of the White House.

\*

**122.**

**336 INT. LIMO - NIGHT**

**336**

Walter. He sits in the back a moment.

Then he gets out.

**337 EXT. WHITE HOUSE GATE/EXT. LIMO - NIGHT**

**337**

Luther has gotten out too. They stand close to each other. They nod. Then Walter starts away.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

(turns -- quiet now,  
at peace)

I did love her, you know.

And he walks away.

A White House SECURITY GUARD as Walter approaches.

**WALTER SULLIVAN**

Is he working late? I haven't an appointment but I'd like to see him if I might.

**GUARD**

You don't need an appointment, Mr. Sullivan.

And as he waves him through --

Luther, standing there, watching the old man.

Walter, a final turn back, a nod of the head.

Luther. He nods back, returns to the car, gets in --

-- and now we begin a BLIZZARD OF CUTS.

**338 EXT. WASHINGTON STREET/INT. LIMO - NIGHT 338**

Luther driving through the night.

**339 EXT./INT. NORTH PORTICO ENTRANCE - NIGHT 339**

Walter entering the White House proper.

**340 INT. WHITE HOUSE - BURTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT 340**

Seth, with a bunch of other officers, standing in front of an office with the name "BILL BURTON" on a plaque -- he opens the door --

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 123.

**340 CONTINUED: 340**

-- Burton has blown his brains out. A note alongside reads: "I am so sorry." Alongside the note is a micro-cassette recorder and a dozen tapes.

**341 EXT. WASHINGTON STREET/INT. LIMO - NIGHT 341**

Luther. Driving faster.

**342 INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY - SECURITY AREA - NIGHT 342**

Walter Sullivan approaching a METAL DETECTOR -- he starts to go through --

-- it GOES OFF --

Walter's embarrassed. He holds up his wrist, showing his watch.

The security guards smile, wave him to go ahead.

Walter continues on.

**343 INT. LIMO - NIGHT 343**

Luther, tense, ROARING along.

344 INT. RUSSELL'S - NIGHT 344 \*

Gloria Russell -- Seth is with her -- he cuffs her, leads her out -- \*

345 INT. AREA OUTSIDE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT 345

Walter, by the door of the Oval Office. The letter opener is tight in his hand now.

The door opens.

Richmond, arms out, comes to embrace him, as he embraced him at the Press Conference.

346 EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT 346

Luther pulling up into the parking lot of the hospital, getting out, passing the parking lot attendant who is listening transfixed to a small radio.

(CONTINUED)

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96 124.

346 CONTINUED: 346

RADIO ANNOUNCER #1 (V.O.)

\*

... in the greatest shock to the nation since the Kennedy assassination, President Alan Richmond's death has rocked...

Luther has moved past now; we can't hear the radio anymore.

346A INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT 346A

Luther enters. A number of people are present, all of them listening to a large radio, on the desk of the Information Clerk.

RADIO ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

\*

... Richmond died violently in the Oval Office and Walter Sullivan...

Luther has moved past now; we can't hear the radio anymore.

347 INT. KATE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT 347

She dozes. Luther sits alongside in a chair.

Outside, the moon is high in the sky.

Kate blinks, half opens her eyes, sees Luther.

**KATE**

... you're still here...?

**LUTHER**

Haven't budged.

She dozes again.

**347A INT. HOSPITAL LOUNGE - NIGHT**

**347A**

A coffee machine in a lounge. Empty. But a TELEVISION SET IS PLAYING SOFTLY.

Luther enters, gets some coffee.

The TV is SHOWING the PRESS CONFERENCE Richmond held. As we WATCH, Walter Sullivan moves down toward the President and they embrace.

**(CONTINUED)**

**125.**

**347A CONTINUED:**

**347A**

Now the Press Conference is over and we are LIVE AT the FRONT OF the North Portico of the WHITE HOUSE. A ton of reporters --

-- and Walter Sullivan, in their midst, beckoning for quiet.

**REPORTER #1 (V.O.)**

Mister Sullivan, have you no idea why the President took his own life?

Luther stops making coffee, looks at the screen.

**WALTER SULLIVAN (V.O.)**

(voice soft)

I know he's been feeling the pressure of office more than ever lately. We've talked about it a great deal.

**REPORTER #2 (V.O.)**

But why would he stab himself?

**WALTER SULLIVAN (V.O.)**

(sadly)

That's a question that will haunt  
me forever. Of course I tried to  
stop him --

(beat)

-- Alan was like a son to me...

Luther smiles, takes his coffee, leaves the room as we --

**CUT TO:**

**347B INT. KATE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

**347B**

Kate sleeping. Seth stands there now. Luther enters  
with his coffee. Seth sees him and they both move to the  
door and confer silently --

-- Seth indicates Kate.

Luther crosses his fingers.

Seth says something we can't make out.

Luther nods.

Seth glances a final time at Kate, then leaves them.

Luther moves to Kate, studies her face.

**(CONTINUED)**

)B( ABSOLUTE POWER - Rev. 5/16/96

126.

**347B CONTINUED:**

**347B**

**KATE**

(eyes still closed)

... was that Seth...?

**LUTHER**

He was just checking in. When  
you're up to it, he said we might  
come over for dinner. He

\*

mentioned --

\*

**KATE**

(eyes half open)

I know, he lives alone --

\*

**LUTHER**

(smiles)

Watch it now.

He arranges her sheets.

**KATE**

... you don't have to fuss...

**LUTHER**

You were forever catching colds.

She nods, drifts and we --

**CUT TO:**

**348 MOON**

**348**

starting to fall out of the sky now.

**349 LUTHER**

**349**

stands by the window, looking out.                      Soon, dawn.    He  
stretches, crosses to her.

**KATE**

... am I going to be all  
right?....

**LUTHER**

(long pause)

We'll be fine.

Kate nods, drifts.

Luther watches her.

Then he goes to his chair --

**(CONTINUED)**

**127.**

**349 CONTINUED:**

**349**

-- reaches down --

-- pulls out his sketchbook.

He turns the pages.

Drawings of Kate.

He turns to a new page.                      Starts drawing her again.    He's

really getting good.

HOLD ON Luther and Kate.

**FINAL FADE OUT.**

**THE END**